



African Violet MAGAZINE

Warm vs. Cool Climate Violets P.10

African Violets and Compost P.48

Hybridizing 101 P.56

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■ African Violet Magazine

•**AVM Editor:** Sophia Bennett, P.O. Box 22417, Beaumont, TX 77720. *Email:* editor@avsa.org.

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•**Convention Awards:** Send suggestions to: Vickie Crider, 6922 Sunflower Grove Dr., Humble, TX 77346. *Email:* awards@avsa.org. Send contributions to AVSA Office.

•**Commercial Activities, Sales and Exhibits:** For information on convention entries or sales room, contact Kathy Bell, 9611 E. Blanding Lane, Tucson, AZ 85747. *Email:* commercials@avsa.org.

Join, renew and learn more at www.africanvioletsofamerica.org

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Every attempt is made to keep articles technically correct. Since the growing of fine African violets can be achieved in many ways, the methods and opinions expressed by writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of AVSA.



President's Message

By Susan Anderson

4040 E. Maldonado Dr. • Phoenix, Arizona

Email: president@avsa.org

Autumn is coming! I must remember this. Yet, I am impatient and urge the thermometer to dip, without success. I must wait. The summer heat will eventually give way to cooler temps. And when it does, my violets will burst to life, pushing up blossoms to brighten my home. Yes, autumn is my favorite time of year. It will be here soon.

Cooler weather means I can finally place orders with commercial growers and get some new plants. There are only a few weeks each year when the temperatures are suitable for shipping plants to Arizona, so I will take advantage. I have my wish list ready to go.

After the long summer recess, September ushers in a flurry of activity for our local clubs. Affiliates are returning to meeting regularly. This is especially rewarding for those clubs that have not met face-to-face due to the pandemic. It is an absolute thrill to gather together and catch up. Virtual meetings just do not compare to being able to meet in person. Many local clubs are accommodating the needs of their members by hosting in-person meetings while also offering virtual options. We are remaining connected by all means possible.

Shows and sales are filling the calendar as local affiliates make plans. These events are terrific opportunities to teach the public about the joy of growing African violets. Enthusiasm is contagious, and you will likely gain a new member or two when you spend a few minutes sharing your tips for growing healthy, happy plants. We all enjoy learning something new. Welcome those that are curious to your next club meeting.

No local affiliate nearby? It may be time to start a club. You are probably not alone; African violet lovers are everywhere! It just takes a few motivated people to get a local club going. AVSA offers tools

and resources to assist start-ups. Several affiliates have recently had successful initiations and can share lessons learned. Contact AVSA for additional information.

Now is a good time to ensure your membership information is current with AVSA. A new membership management system, iMIS, has been implemented at the office and all members can now establish their personal accounts. Once you are set up, you may access the members-only content, pay dues and order materials directly through the AVSA website. Please sign up or call the office for assistance if you have not set up your account yet.

The AVSA Board is preparing for a full year of business. Committee chairs have been appointed and are working on numerous projects. Now is an opportune time to get involved and support these important efforts. Just like local affiliates, AVSA relies on our volunteers to make things happen. You can make a difference! Join a committee today. AVSA is always seeking volunteers and welcomes your skills and contributions. Consider challenging yourself, applying your talents and making an impact.

For those with leadership aspirations, AVSA is currently accepting applications for the Board of Directors. Each year, five candidates are nominated and elected to join the board. Directors play an important role by representing the membership at business meetings, voicing concerns, voting on motions and bringing forth ideas for improving our society. Please consider applying or encouraging someone who would be a good candidate to join the leadership ranks of AVSA. I can attest that serving AVSA is an especially rewarding experience.

Happy growing, showing and sharing!



Editor's Notes

By Sophia Bennett

Email: editor@avsa.org

I've had so much fun — and learned so much — working on my first issue of *African Violet Magazine*. Not the least of these lessons is that this is a wonderful organization full of supportive, dedicated people. I look forward to strengthening these relationships and getting to know you over the coming years.

For this issue, we were able to take several questions that were raised during the Cyber Diamond Celebration Convention and answer them. During one of the Cocktail Hour events, a handful of people asked for suggestions on African violets that are ideal for warm or cool climates. In response, we've updated an article Dr. Jeff Smith wrote on this topic back in 1996 and included it as part of our 75th anniversary series. You will find it on page 10.

Another topic that came up at the convention was hybridizing. For beginners (like me), this can seem like a daunting topic. Jere Trigg was kind enough to put together an extensive "hybridizing 101" piece for the website. We've given you a taste of what he said beginning on page 56. If you want to dive deeper into this topic (and many others), make sure you visit www.africanvioletsocietyofamerica.org. There is a lot of terrific content on the AVSA website.

With in-person shows starting to ramp up again, many of you may be thinking about your next competition entries. Linda Hall is a master of underwater design and shared several tips for crafting beautiful creations in this tricky category. Don't miss her ideas and beautiful photographs on page 42.

This issue contains many of the features you're used to seeing. Vladimir Kalgin profiles an important Russian hybridizer, Eugeny Arkhipov, on page 20. Paul Kroll has a fascinating story about growing *Columnnea pupusii* similar to a bonsai tree so it can be used in designs (page 22). Sprinkled throughout the magazine are dazzling photos of newly-introduced violets and other gesneriads from this year's convention. There are also plenty of updates about what's happening with your society.

My goal is to continue to provide meaty, information-packed pieces that will make growing African violets more enjoyable for you. That being said, I'd also like to introduce some new ideas. For example, as a long-time environmentalist, I was excited to write an article about compost and African violets, which I hope you'll enjoy reading on page 48. I'd like to continue to write about eco-friendly topics such as this, as well as answer the questions that are on your mind.

Correction: July/August 2021 AVM

On page 55, the paragraphs under the photo caption should read: In the photo, the African violet on the RIGHT is grown with one each of 3000K, 6400K and UV-A bulbs (details in my article, UV: Feared and Forgotten, AVM, March/April 2021). The plant on the LEFT in the photo is a propagated plant from the mother on the RIGHT, and is grown using the Full Spectrum Plus LEDs.





AVSA Office Update

By Amy Carruth

P.O. Box 22417 • Beaumont, TX 77720

Email: avsa@earthlink.net

I hope everyone has had a chance to log in to the new website. Several of our members' email addresses are incorrect or no longer active, and this will prevent you from logging into your account. Please do not create a new account if you are already a member. If you have any trouble logging into your member account, please contact the office for assistance.

We are still having trouble receiving all of our mail here at the office. Therefore, we are not receiving all the renewal payments. Please make sure your membership is current by logging into your account on the website. Paying your dues online will ensure we receive your renewal in a timely manner.

We are now heading into fall, when clubs will hopefully start meeting again. Please make sure your club's information is up to date on the website as well as with the office. If your club needs insurance for your meeting, please email the office at avsa@earthlink.net.

The cost for insurance is \$6 per member and will need to be paid before issuing a certificate.

We still have several back issues of *African Violet Magazine* available for the cost of postage. These are great to bring to your meetings and shows, where you can pass them out to new members and help promote AVSA. Around 25 to 30 magazines can fit in a flat rate box for \$15.50. You can purchase these by contacting the office.

If you have missed a magazine, please contact us as soon as possible so we can make sure you are up to date. Renewal notices are also being sent by email. Please be on the lookout for those as well.

With 278 attendees, the Cyber Diamond Celebration Convention this year was a great success. I hope everyone had fun. We look forward to seeing all of you in person in Little Rock, Arkansas, next year.

African Violet Magazine Article and Column Deadlines

- January/February issue: November 1
- March/April issue: January 1
- May/June issue: March 1

- July/August issue: May 1
- September/October issue: July 1
- November/December issue: September 1

We would love to hear from you! Please send articles or article ideas for the *AVM* to Sophia Bennett at editor@avsa.org.

AVSA Open Forum 2021

By Mary Corondan, Former Acting Secretary

Email: firstvp@avsa.org

The Open Forum is held at the AVSA Convention immediately following the Annual Business Meeting. This provides a question-and-answer session for the membership regarding AVSA operating procedures. Although the Open Forum was not held in 2020, Zoom made it possible this year. Below are the items that were discussed.

1. Why has First Class for Android disappeared?

Glenda Williams answered that the OS (operating system) for Androids was recently updated. This required the First Class for Android app to be updated to the new Android OS. Google Play Store monitors apps and flags any that may need updating to the newest OS version. First Class for Android is currently in this process of being updated through the Technology Committee. We don't currently have a rollout date, but we are hoping it will be the end of June. Watch the website for the status of updating the app. Hopefully, it will be a free update for our current subscribers. This is ultimately handled by Google and is out of our control. The First Class for Android app is still operational for those who currently have it, but you are not able to update it or renew your subscription.

2. A member purchased First Class for Mac and has been unable to get it to download properly. What is the next step?

Contact David Kesler directly for help. For those who order it from the AVSA Store, Winston Goretsky has been sending the ZIP file directly to users in a different format. Stephen Covolo stated that it works fine. It is a cloud-based application that automatically updates.

3. Ron Davidson asked why AVSA does not have term limits for committee chairs.

Susan Anderson answered that we are limited in the number of volunteers we have. Some are currently

serving multiple roles. Joyce Stork said this question came up during her term as president. There was no interest in proceeding with term limits at that time, and it hasn't been brought up since. Winston Goretsky said that each new president has the option of appointing new committee chairs when they take office. A new president comes in every two years and asks each committee chair if they wish to continue, or a new chair can be appointed.

4. Candace Baldwin thanked all of those who donated items for the auction.

Between the live and silent auctions, AVSA generated a profit of \$2,096.

5. Maida den Oudsten thanked all those involved in the fabulous virtual convention.

It has been a wonderful experience.

6. Jill Jensen watched Rich Follett's wonderful presentation on AVSA, and she was wondering what our current membership is.

Winston said the current membership is 3,934. Since January, we have increased by 461 members. It has been requested that we post the current membership on the website. There are 277 people registered for the convention.

7. Pam Orris was wondering if there would be a virtual option for future conventions.

President Sue Ramser said this will be taken under advisement.

8. Jill Jensen asked, as a Director, if it is possible to get the names of AVSA members in the area so they can contact them directly and invite them to local affiliate meetings.

If you contact the office, you may be able to get a list from your zip code. Due to privacy issues, unless members indicate their information can be shared,

we cannot give out information. Stephen Covolo stated you can contact affiliate leaders about getting their members to join AVSA. Winston said that we cannot solicit people directly for certain things through Mailchimp. If members make an AVSA Store purchase, we cannot solicit them for membership. Our only communication with them must be regarding their purchase. Lola Sutherland clarified that Stephen Covolo was thinking of getting affiliate members to be AVSA members, whereas Jill Jensen was asking to contact AVSA members to join affiliates.

10. 2021 Cyber Diamond Convention comment. Thanks to all of those who were responsible for this convention. It was so well done. It was as if we were at a live convention. Bingo was thoroughly enjoyed,

as was searching for the Blue Boy blossoms during the scavenger hunt. The hope is that a virtual option will be available for future conventions. Thanks to Linda Hall, who did a great job as auctioneer, as well as Sharon Shannon, who coordinated the Zoom sessions.

Amy Carruth said hello to everyone and thanked those who were involved in the Cyber Convention. She stated that there have been many positive comments.

Winston Goretsky said Bill Price had spine surgery on May 27 and his pain level is greatly reduced. Sue Ramser said to send Bill our wishes for his speedy recovery.

The Open Forum was adjourned.



Photo Credit: Yana Khodchenko

Hodss-Roses

Cyber Diamond Convention
Hybridized by: Y. Khodchenko
Miniature



Rich Follett to Serve as AVSA Secretary

The African Violet Society of America is excited to welcome Rich Follett as the Secretary of the Board of Directors. Follett joined AVSA as a Life Member in 2002 at the Washington, D.C., convention and hit the ground running. In the years since he joined the Society, he has served on the Board of Directors and various committees, written dozens of articles, authored a column for *African Violet Magazine*, survived a turn as a National Convention Chair (Cherry Hill, New Jersey, 2011) and

hybridized a registered variety or two. He is currently taking his first Senior Judges exam. Along the way, he has made friendships to last a lifetime and instigated no small amount of mischief. Despite expert coaching and state-of-the-art support from AVSA friends far and near, he still cannot get an African violet to bloom on schedule for a national show, even with fervent prayer and painstaking attention to detail. He remains undeterred.



And the Winners Are ...

By Mary Corondan

434 Plumwood Way • Fairview, TX 75069

Email: winners@avsa.org

■ Glitter Gultch African Violet Growers, Nevada — Winners:

- Best AVSA Standard Collection: Optimara Monet, Rhapsodie Michelle II, Whirligig Star; Best Standard, Optimara Monet; Best Gesneriad: *Pearcea hypocyrtiflora*, **Richard Craft**.
- Best in Show/Best Trailer: Rob's Wagga Wagga, **Shawn Edwards**.

- Best Semiminiature: Shirl's Cranberry Smoothie; Design Sweepstakes, **Joyce Stork**.
- Best Miniature: Jolly Orchid; Best Design, **Anna Lammersen**.
- Best Species: *S. 5i* clone *velutinus* lite; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Mark Romansky**.

2021 Convention Cocktail Hours and Bingo Game

By Sharon Shannon Email: thirdvp@avsa.org

At the risk of repeating what many have already said, this past year has been tough on all of us. To top it off, one of the things we look forward to the most, our beloved annual convention, was cancelled ... again. So, what do we do when we absolutely can't meet in person? We meet online!

One of the fun things the Cyber Convention Committee really wanted to do was include some social time. We decided to have two two-hour cocktail social hours on three nights of convention week and invite a special guest to each. Beth Baker and I were tasked with making that happen.

Our first special guests were Ralph and Olive Ma Robinson, award-winning growers and hybridizers and owners of the Violet Barn. They gave us a wonderful presentation that included a rare view into their growing area. They explained their setup with their plant stands and lights and gave us some background on their business.

Our next guest was Sandra Skalski, award-winning grower, author of the "Your First Violets" column in the *AVM* and wonderful teacher. She answered many questions for our attendees regarding growing, culture, how to get symmetry after a plant has been in full bloom, damaged roots and growing trailers. It's so educational to speak directly to an expert.

Dr. Jeff Smith, botanist, college professor and author of the "In Search of New Violets" column in the *AVM*, answered many questions about his background, interests and hybridizing. Specific questions came in about hybridizing for yellow and orange violets and crossing African violets with *Streptocarpus* or other gesneriads.

Next up was Ken Muzalewski, award-winning grower, hybridizer of the Hunter's series of African violets and

seller. Ken talked with us about his growing conditions, fertilizer, pest control and hybridizing. He explained how he keeps his growing area clean and pest free and how he handles seeds.

Dianne Duggan is the artist for the blossom and leaf illustrations in the upcoming "Handbook for Growers, Exhibitors, and Judges." Her beautiful illustrations are all done by hand with colored pencils and took her between 300 and 400 hours to complete. She discussed various blossom and leaf types, her art and how she got interested in African violets.

Our last guests were Kathy Hajner and Stephen Covolo. Kathy and Stephen are both award-winning growers, hybridizers (Kathy of the K's series violets and Stephen of the Steffano's series violets and *Streptocarpus*) and sellers. They talked to us about storing seed pods, what reverse fantasy is and how a product called the VegiBee can be used to pollinate plants.

Besides visiting with our special guests, we did Zoom breakout rooms with groups of five or six people in some of our cocktail hours. This gave us the opportunity to get to know people on a more personal basis, which was a lot of fun.

During the convention, we also did a live bingo game with 121 attendees. We played four games, and the prize for each winner was to be the first to enter the sales room at the 2022 Convention. Congratulations to the winners!

I would like to thank Beth Baker for being my partner in crime; our special cocktail hour guests for sharing their time; the bingo team of Krissa Bruck, Bobbi Johannsen, Suzanne Myers and Rich Follett; and Joyce Stork for being our lead in these activities.

75th Anniversary: Warm vs. Cool Climate Violets

By Dr. Jeff Smith Muncie, Indiana

Email: jsmith4@bsu.edu

When many of us think about the homeland of the African violet, we tend to envision rich rain forests and jungles. In our mind's eye, we see areas where plants grow densely in deep soil along streambeds and air filled with humidity and warmth. When we grow the African violet species in our homes, we often try to duplicate these conditions by providing warmth and humidity.

However, not all African violet species are from areas with high humidity and warmth. Some are from much cooler habitats. The best success with the species occurs when the grower matches the plant to the original habitat.

The first section of this article looks at African violet species that do particularly well in warmer places. The second section details plants that will be happier in locations that provide cooler growing conditions.

Violets for warm conditions

Streptocarpus ionanthus (formerly *Saintpaulia ionantha*). This is the species the world has generally come to know as “the African violet.” Most of today’s African violet cultivars grow well under warm conditions because they are the descendants of this species. It was recognized and described as a new species by H. Wendland in 1893.

S. ionanthus has been collected in several places in Tanzania, including the Sigi Caves and Cliffs, where it grows on rock ledges and among boulders. It is also found in the vicinity of the Amboni caves near Tanga, which may have been the source of Baron von St. Paul’s original plants and/or seed. This species is found near sea level or at other lowland sites, giving it the characteristic of growing well in warm habitats.

There have been a number of different color forms reported for this species, including the clone white

ionanthus or Mather No. 20. It requires the same growing conditions as the parent species.

Streptocarpus ionanthus
is the species the
world has generally
come to know as
“the African violet.”

Another interesting clone of *S. ionanthus* is the clone known as Sigi Falls. It was collected from the sides of a waterfall on the Sigi River in the coastal area of Tanzania. This plant is a slow grower and does well in warm conditions. It is a relatively shy bloomer, and success in getting it to flower may be related to increasing the temperature, day length or humidity.

***Streptocarpus ionanthus* subspecies *grandifolius* cl. *grandifolius* No. 237** (formerly *Saintpaulia grandifolia* No. 237). This plant has been one of the most popular species plants in collections. It was collected by W.R. Punter in the West Usambara Mountains of Tanzania and was described by B.L. Burtt in 1958. The only thing mentioned about the habitat was that it was found in a steep valley. The elevation of the collection site was not reported; however, this species grows best under warm conditions, suggesting it was found at lower elevations. It will enjoy any extra heat and humidity you provide, but keep good air circulation around the plant to avoid mildew problems.

Streptocarpus ionanthus* subspecies *grotei* cl. *magungensis (formerly *Saintpaulia magungensis*). This

is one of the trailing species that requires warm growing conditions. The plant was collected in the East Usambara Mountains near Magunga, Tanzania, and was described by E. Roberts in 1950. The elevation and habitat were not given; however, this species does appear to grow best in warm temperatures and good humidity, indicating it was collected at lower elevations.

Another clone of this species, often called *S. magungensis* variety *minima*, was described by B.L. Burt in 1964. It was collected by W.R. Punter from the East Usambara Mountains, on the Mavoera estate near Amani, Tanzania. *S. magungensis* variety *minima* can make a beautiful miniature trailing plant, but it is somewhat difficult to grow well because it seems to require a higher humidity than other African violets. It does, however, do well in greenhouse conditions.

Streptocarpus rupicolus (formerly *Saintpaulia rupicola*). This species was collected by W.R. Punter in 1958 and described by B.L. Burt in 1964. It is one of the few African violets that is found in Kenya rather than Tanzania. The habitat for this species is in the crevices of bare rocks at low elevations in the coastal areas. These habitats often have low humidity, which may explain why this species is easy to grow in homes.

The main concern in growing this species is to provide adequate drainage to avoid rot. It is also more sensitive to damage from pesticide use compared to other species, so care must be given in treating this plant for pests.

The plant *S. rupicolus* cl. Kacharoroni (or Robertson) was collected at an elevation of 540 feet in the Vitengeni River Gorge, Kilifi area, on the coast of Kenya by A. Robertson and Q. Luke. This elevation is one of the lowest known for an African violet, so it is not surprising that this plant requires warm growing conditions. It can also grow exceptionally large compared to other species of African violets, sometimes producing leaves that are over 5 inches across.

Streptocarpus ionanthus* subspecies *ionanthus* cl. *tongwensis (formerly *Saintpaulia tongwensis*). This warm-growing species was collected by Greenway in 1940 from the Tongwe Mountain in East Usambara,

Tanzania, and was described as a species by B.L. Burt in 1947. It was found at elevations of about 2,000 feet or lower, growing on gneiss rocks in a forest area.

This species is an excellent one to grow in a collection because it is one of the most floriferous of the species. It does well in warm growing conditions but does not seem particularly sensitive to humidity.

Tip: A good place to grow any of the warm species is the top shelf of a plant stand. Warm air rises and usually makes the top shelf several degrees warmer than shelves near the floor. Brightly-lit windows in bathrooms and kitchens, typically the warmest rooms in the house, may provide a good habitat for these plants. These areas may also have higher humidity, which will benefit plants like *S. magungensis* variety *minima*.

Placing plants closer to lights may also raise the temperature around them. Natural lighting often works well for the warm species; it produces higher temperatures because the sun's rays are more intense than artificial lighting.

Violets for cool conditions

Streptocarpus nitidus (formerly *Saintpaulia nitida*). If you only have space for one cool species, consider growing *S. nitidus*. This beautiful plant was collected in 1953 in the Nguru Mountains at an elevation of 3,300 feet. The habitat is described as being on rocks in shade by a forest stream. It will actually tolerate either warm or cool growing conditions, but the roots do not penetrate the soil very deeply, so good drainage must be provided. It does well on the lower, cooler shelves of a plant stand. It is a fairly floriferous species and will respond to high phosphate fertilizer treatments to promote blooming.

Streptocarpus goetzeanus (formerly *Saintpaulia goetzeana*). This species is one of the oldest known, having been originally collected in 1898. However, *S. goetzeanus* is not a common violet to find in collections because of its reputation as being hard to grow and reticent to flower.

The key to understanding this species is knowing that it was collected at high elevations of between 4,300 and 6,600 feet. It grows as a creeping herb on

mossy rock surfaces in the deep shade of upland rain forests. This is essentially a cloud forest habitat, so conditions cannot be easily reproduced in homes and greenhouses.

If you want to try growing this plant, make sure it remains at very cool temperatures and is covered with a dome for extra humidity. It will not grow well in a warm room and will quickly die if the temperature goes over 80 F. However, it does surprisingly well in locations where there are extreme temperature fluctuations between day and night. It can tolerate night temperatures as low as 40 F. Consider growing it in a location like a windowsill or unheated porch. As long as the temperature doesn't go below freezing, this plant can survive and grow quite well. The colder nights appear to be critical to bringing this species into flower.

S. goetzeanus is a very fine-rooted plant and must be grown in shallow containers with good drainage. Although it enjoys high humidity, drainage must be excellent or the roots and stems will rot. Try growing this species in a very porous soil mixture with lots of perlite to loosen the soil. Water frequently, but make sure the soil drains rapidly so the plant will not be standing in water.

Streptocarpus teitensis (formerly *Saintpaulia teitensis*). Another species with a reputation for being difficult to grow in cultivation is *S. teitensis*. It was collected in 1938 in the Teita Hills of Kenya and is the northernmost species of African violet known to date. Although the elevation of the collection habitat was not reported, this species is another that requires cooler temperatures.

S. teitensis grows best on the lowest shelves of a plant stand and would likely be another good candidate for a windowsill or unheated porch. The only time I have had this species flower is when the plants were grown under lights in an unheated basement. The temperatures never rose above 60 F and were sometimes as low as 40 F.

Streptocarpus ionanthus subspecies velutinus (formerly *Saintpaulia velutina*). The long hairs and rich red backing of the leaves of this species make an attractive and exotic combination. However, the

plant has a reputation for being finicky. It was collected in 1916 at an elevation of 3,000 feet in the West Usambara Mountains. The habitat was described as damp, rocky banks in a shady forest.

S. velutinus often grows better under cool rather than warm conditions. A good place for it is the lower shelf of a plant stand or at the end of a shelf, where the light intensity is lower. However, the real trick to growing this plant is to know that it is very sensitive to overwatering. It must have excellent drainage to survive. Use a very porous soil mixture, and water it less often than is usual for most African violets.

Streptocarpus ionanthus subspecies occidentalis cl. magungensis (formerly *S. magungensis* variety *occidentalis*). This plant was collected in 1959 in the West Usambara Mountains. It was found on a shaded stream bed, growing in soil but not rocks. While the elevation of the habitat was not given, this plant is very similar to *S. subspecies velutinus* in its temperature requirements. It grows well under cooler temperatures but stops growing or dies when temperatures are consistently over 80 F. Unlike *S. subspecies velutinus*, it is not particularly sensitive to soil drainage and will tolerate almost any soil mixture. Like *S. teitensis*, I have only had this plant flower under very cool nighttime temperatures.

Tip: If African violets in your collection are not doing well, check references to see where they were collected, especially the elevation of the habitat. Plants collected above 1,640 feet will usually do better under cool growing conditions. Try moving these plants to the lower shelf of a plant stand, windowsill, unheated porch or basement that is equipped with lights.

In addition, check the drainage of the soil. Many of the species were collected on rock faces and ledges and must have excellent soil drainage. A knowledge of the requirements of the species will improve your experience with them and make you glad to have them as part of your African violet collection.



AVSA Affiliate Update

By Jeri Anderson, Affiliate Chair

Email: affiliate@avsa.org

This September, AVSA seems to be in a happier place. Many clubs have gone back to their regular in-person meetings as members receive their COVID-19 vaccines. Quite a few clubs have updated their club information, and now clubs are posting upcoming events. These are good signs of getting back to normal.

It was sad to have our 75th anniversary convention be a virtual convention, but the convention team really outdid themselves. It was simply amazing to have an “almost real” experience. If you have an opportunity to speak with any of the convention committee members, be sure to let them know how much you appreciate the wonderful job they did. So many people shared their time and talents to make it all happen.

Our new AVSA website is up and ready for use. You can update your club information and enter events as before, but the pathways have changed. I encourage everyone to take some time to explore the new website and see if you can locate all of the pages you normally use.

To update your club information:

From the Home page, place your cursor on the Participate button. Select Find an Affiliate Club from the drop-down menu. Now, on the top portion of the Affiliate page, click on the Update Affiliate Club Information button. The Affiliate Update form will open for you to input your club's information.

To enter an event:

From the Home page, place your cursor on the Participate button. Select Event from the drop-down menu. On the top portion of the events page, click on Add An Event. The Event Information form will open for you to input your club's event information.

Our new AVSA website is up and ready for use. I encourage everyone to take some time to explore the new website and see if you can locate all of the pages you normally use.

We have a list of members working to start a club:

- Lyn Jones: Wadsworth, OH;
Email: happyviolets4you@gmail.com
- Mary Ann Markey: Port Charlotte, FL;
Email: drmaograde@gmail.com
- Jennie Lawrence: Laramie, WY;
Email: missjennae@yahoo.com (Jennie also has a Facebook Group called African Violets in the Wyoming Area)
- Isabella Spina: Tallahassee, FL;
Email: bellaspina17@gmail.com (Isabella also has a Facebook Group called Tallahassee African Violets)

Hopefully someone will be interested in joining a club in one of these areas. If you are trying to start a new club in your area, please contact me for help.

There are several states that do not have even one African violet club. If you live in one of these states, please consider starting a local club.



Photo Credit: Margery Anderson-Clive

***Smithiantha* 'Malu's Show-Off'**

Cyber Diamond Convention

Hybridized by: M. Anderson-Clive

Large



Photo Credit: Natalia and Sergey Burkatskaie

BR-Miriady

Cyber Diamond Convention

Hybridized by:
N. and S. Burkatskaie
Standard



Photo Credit: Natalia Danilova-Suvorova

ND-Roza Vostoka

Cyber Diamond Convention

Hybridized by:
N. Danilova-Suvorova
Standard

Hamid Asim's Albino African Violet Is Beautiful but Doomed

By Joyce Stork Henderson, Nevada

Email: joycestork@avsa.org

Without green, the world as we know it would not exist. In plants, green pigment is chlorophyll, an amazing compound that allows photosynthesis to use energy from the sun to convert carbon dioxide and water into sugars. Variegated hybrids have leaf patterns with some cells lacking chlorophyll. What happens if none of the cells have chlorophyll — if the plant is an albino? It is a rare occurrence.

In June of this year, Hamid Asim of Turkey shared a photo in the Facebook group African Violet Nerds showing an albino plant that had formed on a propagated leaf of 'Happy Harold'. He captioned the photo "Unhappy Harold — we are heading towards the inevitable end."



Cousins of Unhappy Harold.

Asim is a lecturer at Sakarya University working on a doctorate degree in management information systems. He has formed a group called the African Violet Academy "to ensure that the right information reaches the people who grow African violets." He personally grows about 400 hybrids and more than 1,500 plants. His albino plant has attracted a lot of attention in his group in Turkey as well as on Facebook.

Asim planted cuttings of 'Happy Harold' in June 2020. "This is the first time I've seen this anomaly,"

he says. "I saw the same problem in both leaves that I got from the same mother plant. For one year, this plant has lived attached to its mother.

After a year of growing, Asim is certain that the albino condition is genetic and not the result of a lack of nutrients or cold temperature.

"Unfortunately, the cousins of this plant did not survive. I accidentally dropped my phone on the other cutting and the mother leaf broke. After that, I separated the plantlets and planted them alone. Unfortunately, they died within two days. They cannot photosynthesize without chlorophyll."

The surviving plant was transplanted (with the mother leaf) to a larger pot. "In fact, the longer the mother survives, the longer the plantlet will live. Even though she doesn't live alone, I want to grow this beauty for a long time."

After a year of growing, Asim is certain that the albino condition is genetic and not the result of a lack of nutrients or cold temperature. He explains his culture: "My basic growing principle is that the growing mix must be sterile and free of foreign matter. Most importantly, I use the best quality of growing mix and nutrients. I use white sphagnum, coarse

perlite and small amounts of vermiculite in my growing mixes. At the bottom of the pots, I always have hydroton-like materials (clay pebbles) for good drainage. My water is good quality. I constantly measure the amount of nutrients in it. Since African violets are sensitive to pH, I change the mix every six months and replant them in fresh mix.

“My plants are generally very healthy because I pay attention to these basic rules. I also take light measurements constantly and try not to skip irrigation times ... If I have made a change in any variable about growing inputs, I make a note of it and observe the changes in the plant. In my opinion, working with this method, constantly following the light and nutritional needs of plants and their development, is the most important criteria for success.”



Hamid Asim's growing shelves.

Why Is the Plant Albino?

Dr. Jeff Smith believes the all-white phenomenon is the result of an absence of chloroplasts in the cells. Chloroplasts are organelles that exist within plant cells to produce energy. The chloroplasts are filled with the pigment chlorophyll. Plants will only be green if they have chloroplasts in their cells. When cells without chloroplasts divide, the resulting new cells will also lack chloroplasts.

Smith writes about Asim's plant, “It looks like the new baby started from a non-green cell and all the growth continued from that start. Baby plants often start from a single cell and may not inherit all of the traits of the mother leaf. The albino baby is a parasite on the mother leaf, depending on the parent leaf's ability to photosynthesize to get the nutrients and energy needed for growth. This is true for all

plantlets at least until they get large enough to do photosynthesis for themselves and ‘feed’ their own growth.

“Variegated babies often start out all white then develop some green coloring as they age. During that time, they are totally dependent on the mother leaf for nutrients and energy, just as Hamid's plant is doing. Most babies will eventually develop chloroplasts and start feeding themselves. Once Hamid's albino baby outstrips what the mother leaf can provide, it will die of starvation. It's a credit to Hamid's transplanting and excellent care that he was able to get the albino baby to its current size.”

Unhappy Harold's Future

Hamid knows that Unhappy Harold is doomed. “It grows very slowly and looks healthy. It has its own beauty and attracts people's attention. But the sad part is that it won't last long. Those who have had this experience before also stated that the plant would be short-lived. Therefore, the longer I can keep the mother leaf alive, the longer the plantlet will live.



Hamid Asim's Unhappy Harold June 2021.

“Sometimes we encounter such problems and there are many suggestions for a solution, but I believe this is part of the natural life cycle of these wonderful plants and I do not interfere too much. Finally, I will do my best to keep the mother leaf alive, as I do with every plant I have.”

Coming Events

Check the AVSA Events page (www.africanviolet.societyofamerica.org/events), search the local club on Facebook or contact the organizers listed below for the latest information on these events.

■ September 10-12, 2021 — Maryland

National Capital Area Chapter of the Gesneriad Society
Show and Sale
Homestead Gardens
743 W. Central Ave.
Davidsonville, MD
Friday: 1-6 p.m.
Saturday: 9 a.m.-6 p.m.
Sunday: 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
Bill Schmidt: Danraybill@gmail.com
www.nationalcapitalgesneriads.org

■ September 11-12, 2021 — Wisconsin

Wisconsin Council of African Violet Clubs
Show and Sale
St. Jude the Apostle Church Hall
531 Knapp St.
Oshkosh, WI
Saturday: 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
Sunday: 11 a.m.-3 p.m.
Kevin Degner: kevindegner7@yahoo.com

■ September 18, 2021 — Colorado

Rocky Mountain African Violet Council
Show and Sale
Cherry Creek Presbyterian Church gymnasium
10000 E. Belleview Ave.
Englewood, CO
Saturday: 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m.
Trudy Brekel: violetlady7@msn.com

■ September 18, 2021 — Tennessee

Memphis African Violet Society
Fall Sale
Central Christian Church
531 S. McLean Blvd.
Memphis, TN
Saturday: 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
Geneva Stagg: geneva.stagg@gmail.com
Beth Baker: bakerbethrn@gmail.com
www.facebook.com/memphisavs

■ September 18, 2021 — Texas

NASA Area African Violet Society
Fall Sale and Display
Bay Harbour United Methodist Church
3459 FM Rd 518 E.
League City, TX
Saturday: 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
Dianne Duggan: ddgcampbell@earthlink.net

■ October 2, 2021 — Florida

African Violet Council of Florida
Display and Sale
Christ Lutheran Church
2715 Lakeland Hills Blvd.
Lakeland, FL
Saturday: 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
Mary Jane DiLorenzo: mjdilo92@gmail.com
www.africanvioletcouncilofflorida.club

■ October 2, 2021 — Texas

Spring Branch African Violet Club
Annual Fall Sale
St. John Chrysostom Church
5402 Acorn St.
Houston, TX
Saturday: 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
Vickie Crider: vcriders52@outlook.com

■ **October 2-3, 2021 — Minnesota**

North Star African Violet Council
African Violet Show & Plant Sale
Bachman's Floral, Gift & Garden, Heritage Room
6010 Lyndale Ave. S
Minneapolis, MN
Saturday: 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
Sunday: 11 a.m.-3 p.m.
Mary Kealy-Falk: mkealyfalk@aol.com

■ **October 8-9, 2021 — Nebraska**

Missouri Valley African Violet Council
Fall Show and Sale
DoubleTree by Hilton-Downtown
1616 Dodge St.
Omaha, NE
Friday: noon-5 p.m.
Saturday: 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
Randy Deutsch: rcjsch@prodigy.net
www.MVAVC.org

■ **October 22-23, 2021 — Arkansas**

Central Arkansas African Violet Society
Annual Fall Show and Sale
North Little Rock Community Center
2700 Willow St.
North Little Rock, AR
Friday: noon-5 p.m.
Saturday: 9 a.m.-2 p.m.
Danny Tidwell: dantwell@yahoo.com

■ **October 28-30, 2021 — Texas**

Lone Star African Violet Council
Show and Sale
Radisson Hotel at Fossil Creek
2540 Meacham Blvd.
Fort Worth, TX
Thursday: noon-5 p.m.
Friday: 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
Saturday: 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
Janet Castiglione: 940-595-7417
jmcvioletcas@gmail.com
www.lsavc.org

■ **November 12-13, 2021 — Pennsylvania**

Mid-Atlantic African Violet Society
Show, Sale and Convention
Morgantown Holiday Inn
6170 Morgantown Road
Morgantown, PA
Friday: 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Saturday: 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
Sue Hoffmann: violetsue123@outlook.com
www.maavs.org



Registration Report

By Joe Brun

1220 Stratford Lane • Hanover Park, IL 60133

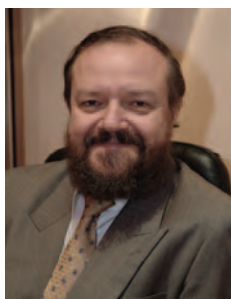
Email: jbruns@qwip.net

■ **Irena Tosev — Belegis, Serbia**

IT's In Your Name

- (11326) 04/27/2021 •I. Tosev
- Semidouble-double white frilled star/random splashes of pink with purple fantasy.

- Variegated medium green and white, ovate, glossy, serrated. •Small standard.



Eugeny Arkhipov, Master of Fantasy Hybridizing

By Vladimir Kalgin Moscow, Russia

Email: vkalgin@yahoo.com

Since hybridizing is a completely impossible task for me, I have great respect for the work of those who have the talent for it. For about 20 years of the Moscow House of Violets' existence, we have met many American and domestic hybridizers and are grateful to each of them for their contribution to the development of the African violet world.

In this column, I would like to tell you about my old friend Eugeny Arkhipov. He not only created unique varieties, but he has actively participated in the development of the House of Violets from the very first day, initiating and implementing many of our projects.

The House of Violets was established in July 2002. From the first days, Arkhipov offered trainings for growers on topics such as cultivation and hybridization. We published his book "Violets in Our Hearts."

Our first show took place in December 2002. Arkhipov was a major organizer. He invited Irina Danilina, who became the first in the House of Violets to lead a group of growers (called the Moscow Growers). He also showed his hybrids at that first event, which was very important — after all, it is the new varieties that African violet lovers want to see.

Today, Russian and Ukrainian hybrids are very popular in America. But 15 years ago, American growers did not know anything about our violets. In spring 2004, I brought about 50 of our varieties to the AVSA Convention. Before the convention, Joyce Stork asked me to give a presentation on African violets in Russia. I called it "The Violet Boom in Russia." I talked about our clubs and shows and presented photos of more than 100 of our varieties.

When the photo of 'AE-Nebesnoe Kryzhevo' (Heavenly Lace), a hybrid by Arkhipov, appeared on the screen, all the participants breathed out in unison,

"Wow!" This largely determined the success of the auction the next day, where growers gave more than \$2,000 for leaf cuttings of Russian varieties.



This photo of 'AE-Nebesnoe Kryzhevo' (Heavenly Lace) delighted participants at the AVSA Convention in 2004.



Paul Sorano congratulates Eugeny Arkhipov with the best in show 'AE-Belye Nochi' (White Nights).

When Paul Sorano came to us in July 2004, he judged the show in the House of Violets and Arkhipov's 'AE-Belye Nochi' (White Nights) became the best in show. Paul noticed an unusual pink-and-white fantasy on a blue flower. This plant was the first Russian variety

registered with AVSA in 2005. We registered more than 100 Russian varieties that year, but Arkhipov was the first in the list because his last name begins with A. ‘Belye Nochi’ was the first in the list because at the time, there was no hybrid by Arkhipov that began with A. (The prefix AE was added by Arkhipov later.)



‘AE-Belye Nochi’ (White Nights) with an unusual pink-and-white fantasy on a blue flower.

At the AVSA 2013 show, Arkhipov’s variety ‘AE-Zhemchuzhnye Zvezdy’ (Pearl Stars), grown by Catherine Thompson, was the best standard. But, perhaps the favorite variety by Arkhipov among American growers was ‘AE-Amur Elite’. Very often at AVSA shows you can find several of these plants, and photos of this variety have been published several times in *African Violet Magazine*. It was Steve Turner who named Arkhipov “Master of Fantasy Hybridizing.”



‘AE-Amur Elite’ is often exhibited at AVSA shows.



‘AE-Gemini New’.

The accolades for Arkhipov continue to come. In June 2021, the Journal of the African Violet Society of Canada had a photo of ‘AE-Egorka Molodets’ (grown by Alla Kotova), a variety with a unique color and fantasy, on the cover.

Arkhipov continues his hybridizing work; every year he has new, unusual introductions. For many years, he has been inviting me to photograph his new varieties. Every such visit is a celebration of meeting violets I have never seen before. His hybrids have their own unique features: unusual coloring, unique fantasy, three- and even four-color petals.

Arkhipov, like other hybridizers, is actively working on creating new characteristics and improving existing ones, such as a new color or a certain kind of fantasy. We regularly send his hybrids to the U.S. Paul Sorano, Ralph and Olive Ma Robinson, and Steve and Donna Turner offer American growers many varieties by Arkhipov.

Arkhipov has a permanent place on one of the shelves in the House of Violets, where he displays his new introductions and best varieties. He also sells leaf cuttings rooted by the hybridizer himself. When Russian growers visit the House of Violets, they can’t pass by these unusual violets that are worth adding to any collection.



Family Portrait: *Columnea purpusii*

By Paul Kroll

5953 Broadway, No. 128 • Lancaster, NY 14086

Email: pfkroll@me.com

Several years ago at a Gesneriad Society convention, a plant was exhibited in the class for trained and sculptured gesneriads. To be eligible for entry in this class, the plant has to have been trained or sculptured, as the class title implies, as opposed to exhibiting a plant that has grown into something unusual in shape or form on its own. *Columnea purpusii* was entered by Ben Paternoster and was absolutely beautiful. It had been trained as a bonsai and looked like a small tree.

For those of you who follow this column, you recall that I enjoy entering container gardens in AVSA shows. These container gardens are called “plantings of gesneriad material” in Gesneriad Society shows. Here are the class titles for the different societies:

AVSA

Dish Garden

Terrarium

Natural Garden

Bottle Garden

Gesneriad Society

Tray Landscape

Terrarium

Natural Garden

(no class)

In the Gesneriad Society container garden classes, gesneriad material must predominate, with other compatible plants limited to ground covers. This presents a problem in that it is difficult to find upright plants to use as a “tree.” Often, plants that are tall enough have leaves that are too large and out of proportion for the small plantings. The gesneriad family is so vast that there are many choices of plants of differing heights and textures to use for the remainder of the plants in your container garden.

When I saw the *Columnea purpusii* trained into a tree form, I had an “aha” moment. I asked Ben about the plant, and he offered me cuttings. Once I received them, I began my journey into the bonsai technique necessary to duplicate his efforts.

When I saw the
Columnea purpusii
trained into a tree form,
I had an “aha” moment.

I put the cuttings into my propagation mix, and when they were rooted, I separated them into individual Solo cups, cutting off the lower leaves to encourage each plant to grow taller. It worked! Each stem grew thicker as the plant grew taller. I continued to cut off the lower leaves, but I did allow branching near the top. Eventually, after about a year’s time, my plant began to look like the small tree I desired.



I continue to prune out the largest growing leaves and thicker growth. The accompanying photographs were taken just after I performed the latest surgery on my bonsai. Above, you can see the small cuttings (upper left), which I will root and pass along, as well as the “trash” I have cut out (lower right) and will

discard. The pruned plant is in the center of the photo with its root ball showing.

This photo at right is of the trimmed plant itself. It shows the plant repotted and ready to continue its growth. I have purposely kept the root ball trimmed to fit into a 2 1/2-inch pot. I don't want the root ball to get too large to use in a small container garden planting.

This same technique could be used on several other Columnea plants. Be careful to choose one that has small leaves to keep things in proper proportion. I have not bloomed this plant. Perhaps it is reluctant to do so due to my constant pruning. It does bloom with red blossoms. A photo of it and other Columnea species and hybrids can be viewed on the Gesneriad Society's Gesneriad Reference Web, located on the organization's website.



Support AVSA when you shop!



Did you know that Amazon has a program for shoppers to designate a charity of their choice, and Amazon will contribute a portion of every dollar you spend? Here's an easy way to support the African Violet Society of America at NO EXTRA COST TO YOU!

Just go to smile.amazon.com and follow the directions.

Select African Violet Society of America as your organization to support.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

What's in an African Violet Seed? Here's a Closer Look

By Joanna Gaelic Miramar, Wellington, New Zealand

Email: joanna.gaelic@hotmail.com

I got bit by the African violet bug in 2018 but got serious about hybridizing them when I moved back home to New Zealand last year. I bought several leaves off another grower, but my impatience got the better of me, and before my leaf babies had even grown out, I asked around on our New Zealand African Violet Facebook group for spare seeds. Another New Zealand hybridizer said they had some excess to share, so I immediately bought them.

I just happen to have a handheld microscope (20x-60x zoom) as I raise monarch butterflies and need a way to check them for parasites. So, I thought, well, if I've got it, why not use it! I decided to do a little experiment: germinating African violet seeds on damp paper towels in a sealed container so I could capture the process of the tiny seedlings breaking out with my microscope. And what a fascinating process it is.

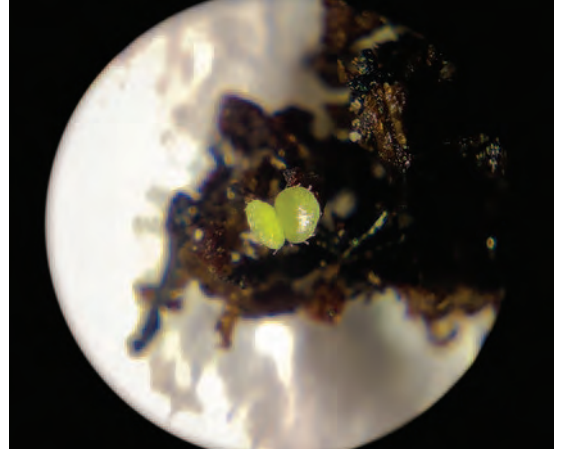
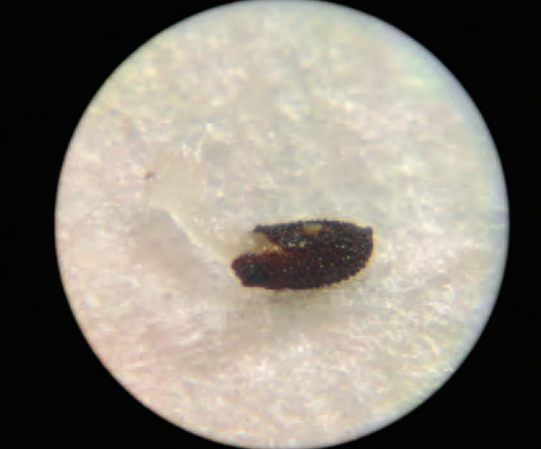
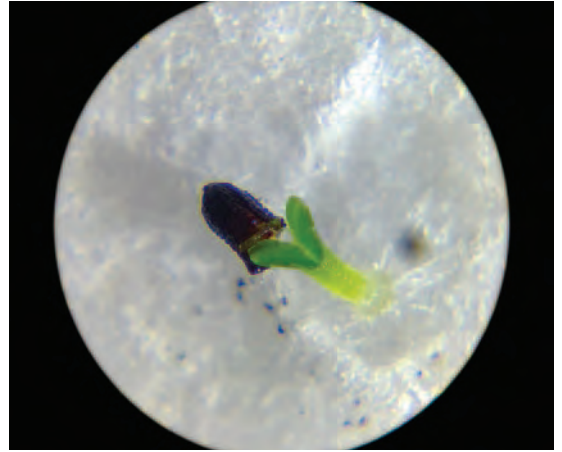
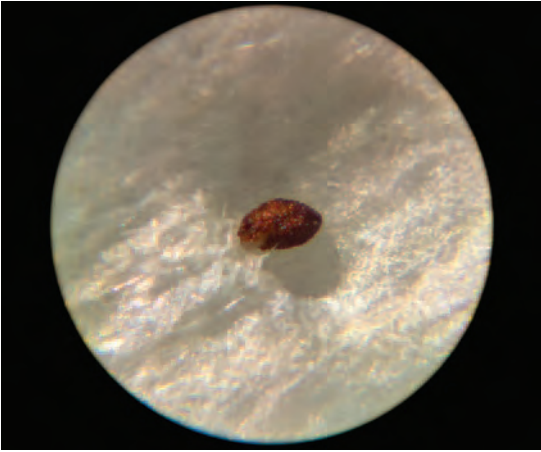
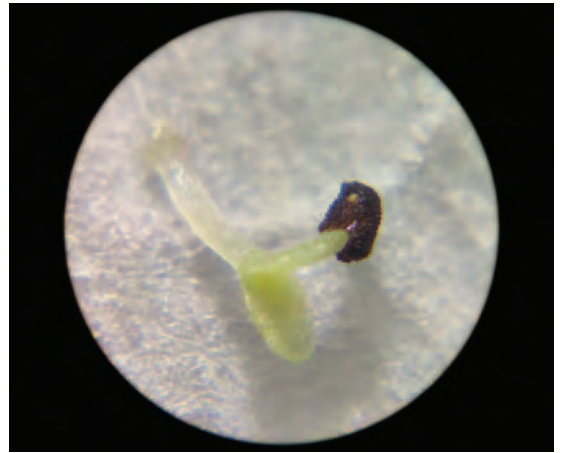
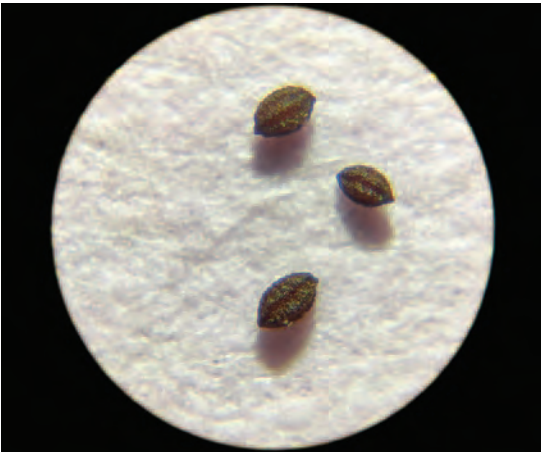


I've read articles on vegetable and other seeds that say this method of germinating on paper towels can be three times faster.

There were some real benefits to germinating seeds with this method. It's a great way to keep track of the seeds so none "disappear" into the soil. This provides a better idea of the ratio of viable seeds in a pod. A paper towel is pathogen free, and it's easy to control the amount of moisture on it. Using a paper towel also uses less space than lining up pots or containers.

On the other hand, growing seeds this way takes a little more time because it adds the extra step of moving the tiny seedlings into pots. I used a wetted skewer (a toothpick would work too), as the seed coat will stick easily to it, to gently move each sprouting seed into potting mix. Ideally, you want to move it before the primary root gets too long and embeds itself in the paper towel. However, if the seedlings grow out on the paper towel, just cut out and place the paper towel in the potting mix along with the seedlings. The paper will break down before long.

Based upon my observations, it takes roughly a week for the seedlings to fully break free of the seed coat. Like most other seeds, they have their primary root come through and secure themselves before the stem and cotyledons follow. I also noticed that a



round hole seems to form in the side of the seed coat prior to the primary root breaking out, perhaps to let light onto the cotyledons.

I've read articles on vegetable and other seeds that say this method of germinating on paper towels can be three times faster. So far, it's taken mine about two weeks to fully germinate, which is pretty standard for

African violets. However, I started this experiment in the middle of winter, so I'd like to do it again in the summer and see if germination happens faster.

I encourage all to try this method at home, whether you have a microscope or not. It was so fun to watch these tiny specks come to life, especially since I know they will grow into beautiful violets over time.

Booster Donations

By Randy G. Deutsch Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Email: fundraising@avsa.org

Donations received from May 1, 2021, through June 30, 2021 Total: \$1,438

Booster Donations support AVSA's ongoing general expenses.

■ **\$500-\$599**

Western Colorado AVS

■ **\$100-\$199**

Austin Grevious, University Place, WA

■ **\$50-\$99**

Central Arkansas AVS

James Coombs, Madisonville, KY

Donna Mosher, Grove City, OH

John Novak, St. Michaels, MD

Joan Wilson, Theresa, WI

■ **\$25-\$49**

Ann Athey, Denton, TX

Randy McMahonill, Ankeny, IA

■ **Under \$25**

Ceil Carey, Plano, IL

Adrienne Clagett, Nashville, TN

George Lousias, Valentine, NE

Patricia Miklica, San Jose, CA

Janice Murray, New York, NY

Stephen Navadel, Ramona, CA

Stan Rough, Temple, PA

Betty Tillman, Fort Worth, TX

Barbara Burde Endowment Fund

By Randy G. Deutsch Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Email: fundraising@avsa.org

Donations received from May 1, 2021, through June 30, 2021 Total: \$4

The Barbara Burde Endowment Fund supports the Society's long-term needs in technology.

■ **Under \$25**

Patricia Miklica, San Jose, CA

Anne and Frank Tinari Endowment Fund

By Janet Riemer Pennington, New Jersey

Donations received from May 1, 2021, through June 30, 2021 Total: \$139

The Anne and Frank Tinari Endowment Fund supports the long-term stability of the Society.

■ **\$50-\$99**

AVS of Philadelphia

*In appreciation for the programs presented by
Beverley Williams and Kurt Jablonski*

Lorraine Leslie

AVC of Morris County

In lieu of speaker's fee for Dale Martens

■ **\$25-\$49**

First AVS of Wichita Falls

In memory of Terri Post's brother-in-law

■ **Under \$25**

Sue Hanna

Patricia Miklica

Boyce Edens Research Fund

By Randy G. Deutsch Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Email: fundraising@avsa.org

Donations received from May 1, 2021, through June 30, 2021 Total: \$179

The Boyce Edens Research Fund supports research and scholarships.

■ **\$100-\$199**

Seattle AVS Inc.

*In lieu of speaker's fee for Ronn Nadeau and
Glenda Williams*

■ **\$25-\$49**

Carolee Carter, Ocala, FL

In memory of Sharon Gartner

■ **\$50-\$99**

Austin Grevious, University Place, WA

■ **Under \$25**

Patricia Miklica, San Jose, CA

African Violet Society of America, Inc.

Combined Statement of Financial Position

December 31, 2020

Assets:

Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 20,193.14
Investments	44,379.53
Inventories	5,769.38
Prepaid Expenses	6,400.00
Restricted Assets:	
Cash and Cash Equivalents	32,529.79
Investments	611,189.43
Capital Assets:	
Other Capital Assets, Net of Depreciation	<u>16,497.06</u>

TOTAL ASSETS	<u><u>\$736,958.33</u></u>
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Liabilities:

Accrued Payroll Taxes Payable	\$ 212.31
Sales Taxes Payable	28.41
Deferred Revenue	<u>113,444.70</u>

TOTAL LIABILITIES	<u>113,685.42</u>
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Net Assets:

Net Assets With Donor Restrictions	412,526.51
Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions-Designated	154,867.89
Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions	<u>55,878.51</u>
TOTAL NET ASSETS:	<u>623,272.91</u>

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	<u><u>\$736,958.33</u></u>
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Becoming an AVSA Judge

By Mary Corondan Email: judges@avsa.org

Have you ever considered becoming an AVSA Judge? You will find it a fun and rewarding experience, one that allows you to travel to shows, renew old friendships and make new ones, and see many new varieties.

The qualifications of an AVSA Judge are to have good judgement and be knowledgeable, experienced, courageous, tactful and kind. An exhibitor is proud of each of their entries, and a judge should always look for beauty rather than flaws.

The hierarchy of judges begins with the Student Judge. After three years of serving as a Student Judge, the level of Advanced Judge can be achieved. It takes a minimum of nine additional years to become a Senior Judge. Following at least 15 additional years, a Senior Judge may reach Master Judge status. Each of these levels has a separate list of qualifications that must be met to proceed to the next level.

For this article, I will discuss the Student Judge level. The first step to becoming an AVSA Judge is to be an AVSA member and study the “Handbook for Growers, Exhibitors, and Judges.” The Handbook is available in the Store on the AVSA website as a downloadable and printable PDF. You can also request a mailed

hard copy. The applicant must grow at least 25 African violets, 15 of which must be registered varieties. In addition, the candidate must have earned three blue ribbons in an AVSA-sponsored show. One of these blue ribbons may have been earned in design or in the “other gesneriad” section of an AVSA show.

A Student Judge is a beginning judge and is entering an apprenticeship program. To become a student judge, students must pass a judging school exam with a grade of 75 or higher. It includes point scoring two African violets.

A list of judging schools is available on the website under Events. A prospective Student Judge should register for an AVSA-sponsored judging school and present proof of having earned three blue ribbons to the teacher. If a school is not being offered in your area, plan to attend the one at the AVSA Convention in 2022.

The more educated you are, the more you can appreciate the wonderful world of African violets. Please consider becoming a judge this year or next.

Minutes of the African Violet Society of America, Inc. Annual Meeting

June 5, 2021 Cyber Diamond Celebration Convention

The Annual Business Meeting of the African Violet Society of America, Inc. was called to order by Third Vice President Glenda Williams at 3:06 p.m. CDT via Zoom video conference. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Glenda Williams, and the invocation was given by Linda Hall. Glenda Williams introduced herself as Third Vice President and presented the President, Sue Ramser.

Mary Corondan, Acting Secretary, reported a quorum was present. She also read the Standing Rules for the Annual Meeting, and they were adopted.

President Ramser appointed Randy Deutsch, Joyce Stork and Linda Price to approve the 2021 Annual Meeting minutes. Sandra Skalski was appointed Timekeeper. Candace Baldwin, Doug Allen and Jill Jensen were appointed Tellers. Jeri Anderson reported the minutes of the 2020 Annual Meeting were approved.

Jill Jensen, Resolutions Chair, presented the Courtesy Resolution, which was published on the AVSA website under the Cyber Convention. There was one correction in the fourth line, which should be changed from 1946 to 1947. The Resolution was adopted.

The Bylaws Amendments for Article IV, Officers and Their Duties, Sections 1 and 2; Article V, Section 1; and Article X, Sections 1 and 2, were considered as published in the May/June 2021 issue of the *African Violet Magazine*. They were presented by Mary Lou Harden, Chair of the Bylaws Committee. The amendments were adopted as printed.

Linda Hall, Nominating Committee Chair, submitted the following nominees to serve as Directors: Scott Ammann from Illinois, Kurt Jablonski from Florida, Patricia Mattson from Wisconsin, Leonard Re from California and Danny Tidwell from Arkansas. The

following officer candidates were presented by Linda Hall: Susan Anderson, President; Mary Corondan, First Vice President; Glenda Williams, Second Vice President; Sharon Shannon, Third Vice President; and Terri Post, Treasurer. There was no candidate for the office of Secretary since the committee was unable to find a qualified candidate. Both the directors and the officers were elected via a Zoom poll. President Ramser announced these directors and officers will be installed at the Society Awards and Installation Event in the evening.

President Ramser recognized the retiring directors: Randy Deutsch, David Kesler, Neil Lipson, Linda Price and Sharon Shannon. Also recognized as retiring were the following Committee Chairs: Carolee Carter, Publications; Linda Hall, Nominating; Sue Hoffmann, Resolutions; and Pat Sutton, Courtesy. A moment of silence was observed in memory of Sharon Gartner, Convention Show Awards Chair, who recently passed.

Retiring Editor Teresa Odle was recognized by President Ramser. President Ramser thanked her for her years serving as editor. Teresa stated that her grandson was just born, and she will miss seeing everyone. A round of applause was offered for all retirees.

President Ramser welcomed incoming Editor, Sophia Bennett, to the AVSA family. Sophia said she is thrilled to be joining the society and is excited about becoming a part of us. She is a freelance writer as well as a communications consultant. She is excited to bring her skills to AVSA. Everyone is encouraged to contact Sophia at any time with their thoughts. Sophia became a member of the AVSA family on May 17.

Danny Tidwell, Little Rock Convention Chair, extended an invitation to attend the 2022 AVSA Annual Convention in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Jill Jensen presented the Lest We Forget list, which recognizes those who have passed this year. The names added were Johnny Williams from Texas, Mary McFarland from Texas, Edward Bradford from New York and Billy Deville from Arkansas. A moment of silence was observed in memory of the AVSA members lost this past year.

Several announcements were made. President Ramser stated there will be a ten-minute break after this meeting before we begin the Open Forum. She also said those who registered for the Highlights package

would have access to the Cyber Convention site through June 13 and those who have the full registration would have access through July 6. Following this meeting, Board members are asked to log out of this meeting and log in to the Called Board Meeting. The quorum for the called Board meeting is 15 members. Mary Corondan reminded Board members that a separate link for the Called Board meeting was emailed to them.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:47 p.m. CDT.



Violets Most Wanted List

By Mary Thompson, Chair, Violet Preservation Committee

Email: preservingviolets@avsa.org

If you have one of these violets, please email the Violet Preservation Committee with your contact information so we can pass it on to the person looking for that violet.

Alamo Red

Alamo Haven

Helen Van Pelt Wilson

Teen Craze

Teen Dream

The original 10, but not Neptune or Blue Girl

2021 Convention Judges Breakfast Notes

By Paul Kroll Lancaster, New York

Email: pfkroll@me.com

The Cyber Diamond Celebration Convention is now behind us. While not quite the same as being there in person, the committee responsible for all the work involved in transforming the convention, presentations, show and activities to a virtual format is to be congratulated!

The Judges Breakfast was held on June 5. There were quite a few in attendance, although not as many as usual. I am certain that has to do with folks not having access to the online meeting.

Shows and Judges Chair Mary Corondan opened the meeting by having the committee members introduce themselves and state their duty assignment. There was only one judging school taught in 2020. Due to the lack of shows, there was not much activity to report on. Five shows actually happened in 2020 when we usually have 70! Things are beginning to open up now.

There will be four new master judges as of October 2021. Their names are in the Shows and Judges column on page 36.

Judging credentials for all judges will not expire until further notice. When schools are able to be scheduled along with shows to gather ribbons, an announcement will be made in the Shows and Judges column of *AVM* regarding the reinstatement of expiration dates for those judges' cards.

Susan Anderson is the show schedule approver. She listed all the changes that have happened recently regarding all the processes involved with shows. All payments, awards packets and rosette orders, schedule submissions, Tally Time and The Winners Are reports, and other materials may be done electronically now. This eliminates mailing costs and the inevitable slow process when having to do things via

snail mail. These things should now be accessed on the AVSA website in the Shows and Judges area.

In the horticulture division, judges are admonished to “look for beauty, not flaws.” This should apply also in the design division.

Here are the questions submitted.

A new exhibitor entered a plant that was in a cache pot (mildly decorative, ceramic, with a hole drilled in the bottom). Classification had counseled her to put it into the class for decorative/unusual containers. The judges eliminated it from consideration. The schedule is the law of the show, and it may have stated that green pots only were allowed. All things considered, after discussion, it was decided that the plant could have been entered into the regular color class.

A teacher stated that a question on his exams most often missed by the students was what to do with a trailer having only two crowns. They often answered incorrectly that the plant should be eliminated from consideration for an award. The correct answer is that 11 points are to be deducted and to proceed with judging.

A senior judge reported that he observed all too often that judges seem to think that the category of interpretation in design is the most important when

scoring. This is wrong. The category of design is worth 40 points, and interpretation is only worth 15 points. Even if the judges feel that the interpretation category was missed entirely, the design itself might still receive enough points to be awarded a red ribbon!

An exhibitor new to design asked whether blooms and/or foliage used might be painted and/or sprinkled with glitter. The answer is yes.

A master judge stated that in the horticulture division, judges are admonished to “look for beauty, not flaws.” She wondered if this could be stressed to apply also in the design division. It seems that judges immediately begin by challenging anything out of the ordinary by asking, “Is this allowed?” rather than welcoming fresh, new ideas. Obviously, originality is encouraged. Judges should act accordingly, embracing creativity.

Another master judge posed the idea of continuing education for our judges. A good number of our master judges are able to judge only at conventions and perhaps do not keep up with current practices. Some have been reported to have made up their own rules! If there were some type of continuing education put into place, perhaps it would be advantageous to all judges. Many fields require continuing education for continued certification. We need consistency throughout our shows.

Seminars might make this available to all. Our judging council programs cover some of these areas, but

perhaps something will be made available for those who have no council or programs to attend. The Shows and Judges Committee will be looking into the possibilities. Recommendations will be made to the Executive Council to see how this might be implemented.

Mary Corondan stated that although the pandemic had a great deal of negative effects on our shows and schools, some good things have come as a result of restrictions. Many members have become more technology savvy and proficient in apps such as Zoom. Many local, state, regional and AVSA meetings have been held via Zoom, which has led to greater participation in some cases. Local programs by experts across the country have been presented via Zoom. These have brought the membership closer together in a time of isolation.

A question was asked by a judging school teacher whether it might be possible to have AVSA judging schools available in a Zoom format. While this may be possible, it is not possible for the required judging of plants as a part of the exam. The integrity of the exam writing could also come into question.

A new, revised “AVSA Handbook for Growers, Exhibitors, and Judges” is in the works. It is planned to have the completed draft ready for perusal by October of this year. When approved, it will go to print. AVSA hopes to have it available for sale at the 2022 convention in Little Rock, Arkansas.

AVSA Website and Records Reminder

Have you created a new password on the new AVSA website that launched in January? Are you having trouble logging into your account? Please contact Amy Carruth, AVSA Office Manager, at 409-839-4725 for assistance.

Does AVSA have your email address so renewal notices and reminders can be sent to you via email? If not, please send your current email address to office@avsas.org. Thank you for your help in keeping our records up to date.



Photo Credit: Galina Lazarenko

LiK-Portret na Pamiat

Cyber Diamond Convention

Hybridized by: G. Lazarenko
Standard



Photo Credit: Natalia Skorniakova

RM-Gulizara

Cyber Diamond Convention

Hybridized by: N. Skorniakova
Standard



Photo Credit: Svetlana Repkina

RS-Granatovyi Blesk

Cyber Diamond Convention

Hybridized by: S. Repkina
Standard



Shows and Judges Column

By Mary Corondan, Chair

Email: judges@avsa.org

It was wonderful getting together with everyone during the Cyber Diamond Celebration Convention. Seeing familiar faces again was so refreshing!

The Judges Breakfast went extremely well. Everyone was able to get their questions answered, and it was so much easier to hear everyone via Zoom rather than in a meeting held in a large banquet hall. For specifics on the question-and-answer session at the breakfast, please refer to the article written by Paul Kroll on page 32.

Last year was a challenge for shows due to pandemic restrictions. In 2020, there were only five shows. In 2021, we have already had four shows to date, and most councils that have fall shows are planning to proceed with them. This is great news for the violet world.

A total of 16 students took the Senior Judge's exam in 2020. The first Senior Judge's exam was taken by three students, five took their second exam and four took their third exam. Four judges will earn their Master Judge's certificate in October 2021. Congratulations to Carolee Carter (Florida), Betsy Fox (Wisconsin), Gail Podany (Minnesota) and Barbara Werness (Minnesota) for achieving the status of Master Judge.

This is a reminder that there is now a form available online to submit schedules for approval. The forms contained in the show packet are online as well. The "And The Winners Are ..." form and Tally Time form can be submitted electronically in one easy fillable form. All of this information and more is available in the Shows and Judges section of the AVSA website.

The Shows and Judges Committee is considering ideas to help Master Judges stay current with judging practices through continuing education. More will follow on this as it develops.

The updated version of the "AVSA Handbook for Growers, Exhibitors, and Judges" is still under revision. One feature will be updated illustrations of blossom and leaf types, which are being contributed by Dianne Duggan. We are very appreciative to Dianne for sharing her talent with AVSA. The goal is to have the proof of the Handbook ready for Shows and Judges Committee and Executive Committee approval in October, and to have the completed edition available for sale at the 2022 AVSA Convention in Little Rock. A downloadable version will also be produced.

Several members have mentioned the possibility of a videoconference (Zoom) judging school. The lecture portion of a judging school could easily be done this way. The difficult parts would be the judging of plants and maintaining the integrity of the test. An affiliate may want to consider doing the lecture portion of the judging school via Zoom, and then doing the judging aspect and written exam in person. This would lessen the time spent in the classroom.

At the current time, all judging certificates have been extended indefinitely. When affiliates throughout the country begin to host shows again, the extended expiration dates of current judging certificates will be announced in this column. As previously stated, Senior Judges should continue to take their exams on schedule.

Continue pampering those violets. Shows are on the horizon!

The Old-Fashioned Windowsill Violet Enthusiast

By Pat Lasusky Willingboro, New Jersey

I grew up in the 1960s in a house full of African violets. My mom, who was a caring and creative woman, was also a stay-at-home mom for the first 20 years of her marriage. Along with keeping an immaculate house, raising her children, cooking and all that goes along with being a homemaker, she pursued various interests.

One lasting interest was her African violets. Every morning, she would walk along the front windows, taking a spent blossom or a bad leaf off here and there. This continued to be her habit until she was physically unable to do it. Mom was the old-fashioned violet grower: terra-cotta pots, soaked and scrubbed in the kitchen sink; Dad being called upon to blow cigarette smoke onto the leaves to kill aphids. (Too bad Dad didn't realize that the cigarettes were as bad for him as for the aphids.)

As a child, I wasn't crazy about the African violets. I thought the hairy leaves were creepy. Plus, being clumsy, I was always knocking over the glass pill bottles (remember those?) full of water in which Mom propagated leaves. Still, I watched as she explained to me what she was doing and how to take care of the plants. For her, with no personal income at that time, it was a low-cost hobby to start, especially since she could trade plants with her friends. I don't believe my mother ever purchased a violet.

Fast-forward to 2010, when I inherited Mom's remaining violets and the house I grew up in. How could I not love the violets, flowering all year round on our northeast-facing, deep front windowsills? Those two 8-foot-wide, unobstructed windows are just magic for gesneriads of all kinds. The living room also has an east-facing window on the perpendicular wall, so gentle direct light strikes the violets in early

morning and the room is bright all day. When people ask me my secret, I tell them it's just a good house for violets.

Mom also switched
from bottom-watering
to top-watering at
some point.

I've switched to plastic pots, as my mother did in her later years, and I use a lot more perlite than she did. Mom also switched from bottom-watering to top-watering ("Water them until they wet out the bottom") at some point. "Water early in the day; you don't like to sleep in a wet bed and neither do they," she would tell me. I mostly top-water, though I have a few on wicks and some are easier to bottom-water because of the density of the plant. I like to see that my soil is porous by observing how the water sinks in.

Growing violets on the windowsill is a wonderful hobby, as simple or as complicated as you want it to be. And now I walk up and down my row of violets almost every day, enjoying their beauty and thinking of my mother.



In Search of New Violets

By Dr. Jeff Smith

Indiana Academy, Ball State University • Muncie, IN 47306

Email: JSmith4@bsu.edu

In June, I had the good fortune to be one of the presenters at the Cyber Diamond Celebration Convention. I also served as one of the Cocktail Hour speakers. Many of the questions in this column stem from either the presentation or from questions asked during the Zoom happy hour. Thanks to everyone who participated in the convention.

Q: You mentioned in your presentation that some African violets produce multiple flower stalks from each leaf axil. Any idea how this trait is inherited or how it can be selected for?

A: The trait for multiple flower stalks is not common and only occurs regularly in one of the species clones (*S. ionanthus* cl. *grandifolia* No. 237). In most instances where a trait is rarely seen or is not common, the trait is usually a genetic recessive. I have not tried to hybridize for this trait and cannot provide direct evidence that it is a genetic recessive, but I think that would be a good assumption if a hybridizer were trying to select for the trait.

The species clone No. 237 would make a good parent for starting a breeding program for multiple bloom stalks. It would make a good seed parent because the single flowers readily accept pollen and produce seed pods. It also has good symmetry, high bloom count and other desirable traits. The blue flower color would be dominant and the flowers are droppers. Both traits could be undesirable depending on the hybridizing goals. Choose a pollen plant of similar symmetry, high flower count and perhaps a recessive flower color such as pink or fuchsia red. I'd suggest using at least a semi-double flower in order to get good pollen.

The multiple bloom stalk trait will not be evident in the young F1 plants. You may have to grow several to mature size to see if they exhibit the ability to produce

multiple bloom stalks. If any of the F1 offspring do have the trait, try selfing the plant or crossing two good F1 plants together to get an F2 generation. This should help reinforce the multiple bloom stalk trait and bring out any recessive flower colors.

Another idea would be to make the cross on the clone No. 237 using several different pollen parents. This should produce a wider range of F1 offspring to choose from to produce the next generation. Be prepared to trash many of the resulting F2 offspring, but hopefully you'll get some plants with the ability to produce multiple bloom stalks.

Q: Can a hybridizer select for higher flower count on bloom stalks?

A: Yes, the flower count on a bloom stalk does have a genetic component, and selection can be made for higher bloom counts or higher number. However, there is only so much energy available for producing flowers. It will be very difficult to increase the flower number on plants with very large flowers or those with high petal counts. It would take a significant increase in the total energy available to the plant to increase the number of flowers with those characteristics.

Using plants with smaller flowers or those with a single row of petals will be easier to work with when selecting for higher flower counts. The standard method of breeding plants with high bloom counts together and selecting for that trait in the offspring should work.

Q: Do you think hybridizers will ever be able to produce trailers with coral red flowers?

A: I don't see why trailers with coral red flowers shouldn't exist, but I can anticipate that it would be challenging to get all of the necessary factors together in a single plant.

I would start by crossing a good trailer with pink or fuchsia red flowers with a plant with good coral red flowers. You should choose your parents to also reflect the size of trailer you want to produce. Using standard plants in the original cross will likely result in standard trailers. Using semiminiature or miniature plants will produce smaller trailers. It shouldn't make a difference which parent is the seed parent and which is the pollen parent in order to get trailers or coral red flowers. However, if you are after variegated foliage, be sure to use the variegated plant as the seed parent.

Because coral is a genetic recessive, the F1 plants are likely to all be non-coral colors. The amount of trailing produced in the F1 generation will depend on the genetic background of the trailing parent. However, I would anticipate that there will be little trailing in these plants. Select any offspring that show a hint of trailing habit. You will need to also look for offspring that have pink or fuchsia red flowers. Try to also find plants with a strong flowering habit or other desirable traits. If you grow out a large number of the F1 offspring, you'll have many more choices to pick from.

Cross your best F1 offspring together. At least one parent must have fuchsia red flowers in order to get coral red flowers in the next generation. Your odds of getting the coral factor in the F2 generation will be approximately 25%. If both F1 parents are fuchsia, you increase the probability of getting coral red flowers.

The inheritance of trailing will be complex and depend on the starting trailer parent. If you treat trailing like a recessive, you may have about 25% trailers in the F2 generation. The odds of getting coral red flowers on a trailer would be approximately the product of the chances of the two traits multiplied together, say perhaps a one in 16 chance. The odds are likely to be even lower depending on the exact mechanism of inheriting the trailing growth form. Be prepared to grow out a very large number of the F2 seedlings to increase the odds of getting the exact combination of traits you want.

If you carry pink flower color along with the other traits, this plan should also produce a few trailing

plants with coral flower color in the F2 generation. If you want star-shaped flowers, try to choose parents that have star-shaped blooms. That trait should then breed true through the F1 and F2 generations. If only one of the original parents has star blooms, the combination of trailing, coral red and star shape will drop to about a one in 64 chance. Possible, but rare in your F2 generation.

Q: The number of new introductions that were shown at the Cyber Convention was incredible. Is there a reason that there were so many new hybrids this year?

A: I, too, was very impressed with the number of new hybrids, both in African violets and African Primroses. There were also a good number of new sinningia hybrids as well. In my opinion, the reason is that there are a much larger number of people hybridizing right now than has been true for a number of years, especially the hybridizers in Russia and Ukraine. Many of these individuals are fearless in trying to put different combinations of traits together. As a group, they are really pushing the possibilities forward, and the result is many new plants.

In looking at the traits, I didn't see many examples of what I would consider "new" genetic traits. What I saw was the combination of existing traits in different ways (combining stars with wide white edges such as those found in Optimara myLove with puff fantasy centers, streaked fantasy centers, coral-colored centers, coral color in puff fantasy centers, etc.). All of these traits have been available to hybridizers for several years, but they haven't been combined together. There were also a number of new hybrids with bell-shaped flowers. This flower shape has been available for many years, but few hybridizers have chosen to work with the trait. The hybridizer working with this trait has produced several new introductions and color combinations with the bell flower shape. It was wonderful to see so many imaginative combinations of existing traits!

Of course, sending in pictures of the new introductions for a cyber convention made participation very easy and probably contributed to the high number of submissions.

Welcome Sophia Bennett, New Editor of *African Violet Magazine*

By Joyce Stork Email: joycestork@avsa.org

Sophia Bennett, living in Eugene, Oregon, officially joined the AVSA family July 1 as the 7th editor in our 75-year history. She writes that she has always loved house plants. “I have a few African violets that were gifted to me by important people in my life — my dear grandmother and a wonderful neighbor, both of whom have now passed away. They sit in a sunny living room window along with an orchid, jade plant, aloe and an assortment of other plants.”

Sophia also loves writing and got her start as a freelance writer by penning articles for her local Master Gardener newsletter as a volunteer. Since AVSA does not pay for articles, she suggests that writing for the *African Violet Magazine* is a great way for people looking to start a writing career to build a portfolio to show potential clients. It is also a great way to give back to AVSA.

Like every editor, Sophia depends on others to provide most of the content for the magazine, especially the wonderful group of writers who have previously contributed. She hopes to add new contributors as well. “Even if someone doesn’t consider themselves a writer, if they have a good idea and good information to share, we can work together to create an article,” she says.

When asked what kinds of articles she especially hoped to receive, she provided this answer: “I strongly believe people read magazines because they want good information they can use to make their lives better, and beautiful pictures that they can enjoy. Given that, my inclination is to focus on articles that provide solid, science-based, practical information that the average African violet grower can use to get healthier, attractive plants. Stories with photos are also great, but please make sure your photos are high resolution (at least 300 dpi).”

Even if someone doesn’t consider themselves a writer, if they have a good idea and good information to share, Sophia will work with them to create an article.

Sophia brings a fresh point of view to her approach to stories. “Articles with an environmental bent always make me excited. I’m also interested in any tips that clubs have for recruiting and keeping new members, especially younger people or people who come from different backgrounds than the typical member, or rethinking meetings/events as we come out of the pandemic.” She is less inclined to use human interest or personal reflection articles unless there is a unique angle or story that delivers real value to readers.

Sophia also notes that she plans to write one or two articles for each issue of *AVM*. Because of that, she would appreciate input from those who have a good idea but feel reluctant to write an article themselves.

Would you like to write for *AVM* but don’t know what to write? Sophia would be interested in building a list of volunteer writers to do assignment work. “If you’re interested in writing for the magazine but

don't have a topic in mind, definitely let me know by emailing me at editor@avsa.org. If you can send samples of anything you've written in the past, that's very helpful. You might also give me some ideas for what you like to write about, and how you like to gather information. Are you an amazing book or online researcher? Or would you rather interview people?" Author guidelines that provide more tips on submitting stories can be found at africanviolet.societyofamerica.org/learn/magazine.

Photographers should remember that the magazine can use only high-resolution photos (at least 300 dpi). She also notes that photos should be "good quality — in focus, with good framing, and interesting."

Sophia describes the process of submitting articles this way: "If someone is interested in writing an article, they might send me their idea and/or a brief outline first. That will help me determine if it's a good

fit for the current issue of the magazine. They're also welcome to send a completed article and I'll use it if I can, but might save yourself some time by sending the idea first to make sure I can use it."

In most cases, submissions received by the issue deadline will be used in the same issue. "I try to be kind and constructive about feedback," Sophia says. "I know many people have terrible memories of red ink and overly critical comments from their time in school. If an article is solid, I try to lightly edit. If an article needs help, I'll typically take a shot at making improvements and then send it back to the writer for review and maybe some additional work." She does reserve the right not to use submissions that don't have enough information to be of real value to readers.

Welcome Sophia! AVSA looks forward to a beautiful future with you at the helm.



Photo credit: Marina Karpova

Streptocarpus
'MK-Rozovyi Desert'

Cyber Diamond Celebration
Hybridized by: M. Karpova

Underwater Design 101

By Linda Hall Ravenwood, Missouri

Email: llhall@grm.net

If any of you know me and my designing, you know that underwater designs are my all-time favorite! I started my design career in 1987 in Lawrence, Kansas, at a Missouri Valley African Violet Council show. My first attempt at underwater design came at the 1989 Kansas City AVSA Convention. The theme was “Royal Double Play.” It was a total disaster! I used white blossoms, which became translucent very quickly, and part of the design floated by the time the judges got to it. Guess what award I got? A well-deserved white ribbon. I was devastated!

I decided right then and there that my next underwater design would be a blue ribbon. It happened at Missouri Valley African Violet Council show that fall. Not only was it a blue ribbon, but it was best in class. I have been in love with the challenge of underwater designing ever since.

To create your own award-winning underwater design, the first thing you want to do is read your schedule several times so you are sure of the size limitations of your container and what color backdrop to use (if any). If the schedule does not say that backdrops are not permitted, I like to put a colored niche that complements the design behind the bowl. The reason is that there is always a painted wall, wild printed wallpaper or something behind where the glass container is to be exhibited, which can distort or take away from the design.

Next, choose which glass container will best fit the design. Be very careful here. Try to use a bowl with at least one flat side. Round bowls distort and enlarge the design unless the design is smaller and completely centered. The design might look great when you put it in the bowl, but add water and it is a totally different story. I speak from experience! In a flat-sided bowl, what you see is what you get. Before

you use the container, make sure you thoroughly wash it inside and outside.



A selection of containers ideal for underwater designs.

Next, assemble all the mechanics you will need. Frogs (pin holders) of various sizes, a hot (not cold) glue gun, various size fishing weights, a ruler, scissors, miscellaneous shells, and green and white floral sticky tape should be in your designing box. I also use floral glue and Elmer's spray glue. Various size tweezers, including a pair of 10- to 12-inch tweezers, are a necessity in underwater design.



Several of the tools needed to create beautiful underwater designs.

Whatever you want to use for line material, please test it at home prior to final assembly of the design. This is to make sure the material does not bleed or become milky when left in water.



A beach-inspired design by Linda Hall.

I tell you from experience, use dark purple or red blossoms with thick stems. They will last longer before they become translucent. Their color stands out underwater, which makes them an excellent focal point. Double blossoms also last longer. I can't say enough times to test your line materials and blossoms underwater before you assemble your final design.

Now that you have your design plan, bowl, line materials, blossoms and mechanics assembled, let's begin! Select your frog or whatever mechanic you choose to attach your line material and blossoms to. Put your line material in your pin holder and then put the pin holder in your container (using your 12-inch tweezers) before using your hot glue gun to secure the line material. Make certain that your line material does not extend above the top of the bowl (actually, leave 1/2 to 3/4 inch of dead space above the line material). Also, be certain your line material does not touch the sides of the bowl.

I can't say this enough times: Test your line materials and blossoms underwater before you assemble your final design.

If all is good, I remove the pin holder from the bowl and apply the hot glue to the line material and pin holder to secure them (we don't want them to float!). I use a hot glue gun because it dries relatively clear. Cold glue becomes very white and is more difficult to conceal.

Next comes the blossom placement. Personally, I like to place my blossoms at the base of the design for my focal point. I use my hot glue to hold the blossom(s) in place. I have also had them "climbing up" the line material for the visual effect of drawing your eye through the design. When they climb, this is where I use my floral glue. Follow the directions on the can or tube and it works quite well.



An underwater design features gesneriads.

Cover your pin holder and mechanics with a shell, leaf or other decorative item. Make sure you cannot see any of your mechanics from the front of the design. This is also where you check for strings of glue that might be hanging around. Trust me, the judges will find them!

Now your design is ready to attach to the bottom of the bowl. I use either green or white floral sticky tape. I put a small amount on the bottom of the pin holder. I then take my long tweezers and lower the design into the bowl and push the pin holder down until it sticks to the bottom of the bowl.

There is another theory about anchoring your design that I have used on occasion with a larger bowl and shell. I construct my design in the shell, anchor it with fishing weights and then lower it into the bowl. No sticky tape is required since it is weighted. Again, you must make certain your mechanics are not visible. Depending on the theme of the design, you could cover your mechanics in the bottom of the

bowl with sand, glass marbles and aquarium gravel, for example.

Now you are ready to add water. First, place your bowl in its final resting place for judging (you do not want to move it after you have added water). I caution you here to use only distilled water. Bring a gallon jug with you. Tap water contains many chemicals and can cause the water to become cloudy or turn color. It will almost always add bubbles to the design. Judges are not allowed to deduct points for bubbles, but they can detract from your design. I like to hold my fingers in a corner of the bowl and slowly pour water over my fingers and dribble it down the inside of the bowl so the water does not disturb my design.

I have had some good designs and some disasters, and those disasters came when I did not try my design at home before I went to the show. I love creating underwater designs and I hope you will give them a try!

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Let's Go to the Library!

By Kurt Jablonski

Email: library@avsa.org

As the new Chairman of the Library Committee, I have some very large shoes to fill. Throughout AVSA's history, several extraordinary people have led this committee into the future with the help of their dedicated committee members. They have brought all of AVSA's members many quality resources over the years. I thank them for all they have done.

For those who do not know me, I live in Miami Beach, Florida. I have been growing violets for about 16 years. Like many of you, my start came from my grandmother, to whom I am most grateful. I cherish all the memories and people who have brought me to where I am today. I have attended seven national conventions and they are the highlight of my year because I get to be with violet friends and family.

The Library Committee has been around since the early days of AVSA and has always played a vital role in preserving our African violet legacy. In the beginning, its focus was documenting national conventions in slides and turning them into presentations that local clubs could rent so members could experience a national show even if they could not attend in person.

However, as the years progressed, technological advances opened many doors, and the Library Committee has kept on top of all the cutting-edge changes in order to create high-quality, exciting media. Digital cameras have given all of us a chance to experience plants, people and all the things we love as they truly appear in real life. Today, high-definition video is the trend. There is so much we can do to capitalize on this valuable tool. The committee has already filmed video interviews of top convention winners, hybridizers and a few convention presentations.

One area I would like to greatly improve upon is the Library section of the AVSA website. There are photos from recent conventions, but I would like to digitize all the old convention slide programs so that a new generation of growers might take a trip back in time and see how things have changed during our society's history. I would like the committee to produce more video presentations for members. I would also like the committee to be able to better film the presentations at the national convention so we can turn them into high-quality programs that local clubs can rent via downloadable links from the AVSA website.

Many more ideas come to mind, as I am very ambitious, but Rome wasn't built in a day, and I know I cannot do this alone. I will need the help of my committee, including any new people who would like to join, to get this good work done. In addition, I have several ideas for programs but would like input from the members. I want to know what they would like us to do.

The last two years have been extremely challenging because the pandemic has robbed most of us of so much, including our monthly violet meetings and local/regional shows. Thank goodness for virtual meetings and the virtual conventions, but there is nothing like experiencing these events in person. I am ready to be back with you all in person, and I promise to work hard and help create a well-rounded portfolio of programs and videos that appeal to every type of member in AVSA. Now it's time to get to work.

Judging Design for AVSA

By Paul Kroll Email: pfkroll@me.com

When speaking of design, most people — spectators and judges alike — tend to think in terms of “I like that one” or “I don’t like that one.” It is human nature to like or dislike anything, but we must remember that the AVSA Handbook does not use those terms anywhere within its covers!

How is it best to judge the Design section of AVSA shows? By utilizing the AVSA Scale of Points for each particular type of design: Container Gardens, Interpretive Flower arrangements and Interpretive Plant arrangements.

The Scale of Points for Container Gardens has the top category labeled “Landscape Plan” as opposed to the category “Design” used for the flower and plant arrangements. The elements and principles of design (discussed below) do not apply so strictly to Container Gardens as they do to the other arrangements. By this, I mean that different levels of the landscape enter into the consideration: hills, valleys, upper and lower levels of the “soil” surface.

I was once on a panel that judged a dish garden that was entirely flat, with no contours at all. The panel awarded this exhibit a third place, taking off the most points under the Design category. Much to our horror, we found out that the exhibit was done by Ethel Champion, who was a Master Judge. She comforted us and said, “You did the right thing. I tossed that dish garden together the night before entry, in a hurry, and it didn’t deserve any higher score.” Think about this example and remember it the next time you construct or judge a Container Garden.

If you do not have material tall enough to be your “tree(s),” make the hill on which you plant that material a bit higher. It is also possible to have the lowest portion/section of the landscape be well below the edge of the dish you choose. This is

another way of adding interest and varying levels to your landscape.

In the Interpretive Flower and Interpretive Plant sections of the show, the top category on the Scale of Points is for design. This is where the elements and principles of design are assessed as they apply to the design you create or are judging.

There are six elements of design. The elements of design are readily seen.

Color	Pattern
Form	Space
Line	Texture

There are six principles of design. The principles of design are felt rather than seen.

Balance	Contrast
Dominance	Rhythm
Proportion	Scale

Twelve categories share a total of 40 points in the overall Design category of the Scale of Points for the arrangements. Forty divided by 12 equals 3.33 points for each for those twelve categories. Judges must tally the category points, adding or deducting appropriately. Once a score has been reached, it is imperative that the written comments justify that score. If points have been deducted, indicate the reason behind the decision. Do not leave the exhibitor wondering. Sometimes it is more beneficial, as judges, to think in terms of the comments first and then deduct the points to reflect those comments. Either way, it is necessary to think in terms of balancing the scores and written comments.

One of the most prominent errors on the part of an exhibitor is not filling the niche to approximately seven-eighths of the height. We often see designs that are considerably short of filling the height

dimension. It is possible to raise the design in its niche by elevating the whole thing with something under the cloth or drape at the bottom of the exhibit.

Another thing to consider is that as measurements decrease and a smaller design is executed, the categories of scale and proportion become very important. A design that is too large for its small niche will be very out of proportion. A container that is too large will also detract from the overall proportion of the design.

One needs to be very careful of color as well. Anything white used in a design really jumps out. My wife always says, “White adds 10 pounds.” This is a good quip to remember when choosing a white container or other object to use in your design.

Another consideration when thinking in terms of the smaller arrangements is the blossom size. Using a miniature or semiminature blossom will help the proportion and scale of your overall execution. Try different blossoms of differing size and see which appeals best to you.

This article is not meant to be a complete guide to design either as a judge or exhibitor, but rather a thought-provoking essay to encourage you to think about your designs, whether judging them or executing them. Remember: Growing is great, but designers have the most fun!

This article originally appeared in the June 2014 Ohio State African Violet Council newsletter.

“Perfectly Pittman” Video

This video chronicles the multiple hybrids, growing techniques, growing spaces and AVSA involvement of Hortense and Ray Pittman.



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Compost and African Violets

By Sophia Bennett Email: editor@avsa.org

Compost is typically something you hear about in the context of farms and outdoor plants. But compost can be great for indoor plants, including African violets.

Randy Ritchie, CEO of Malibu Compost, has been a guest speaker at the San Diego County African Violet Society, where he's espoused the wisdom of using compost and compost tea for violets. "House plants are plants, and all plants generally need some version of macro- and micronutrients," he said. "In an organic fertilizing program, you're giving the plant the option to uptake something it needs in a much more simplistic and direct way, and in a way it's used to absorbing nutrients, rather than giving it a synthetic fertilizer."

In addition to providing plants with vital nutrients, compost can help with water retention and increased soil fertility. But because of its ability to hold water in the soil, it's important not to go overboard when using it with containerized plants, cautioned Erica Chernoh, commercial and community horticulture agent at the Oregon State University Extension Service in Lane County.

"Whether compost is good for house plants really varies depending on how much water those house plants need," she said. "For succulents or plants that need a lot of drainage, it doesn't work as well." Even when it's used with plants that need a lot of water, "the soil can get heavy, which means over time it will collapse and you can lose pore space, which can lead to anaerobic containers."

The fact that compost can contain both beneficial and harmful bacteria means it does require handling with some care. Here are some tips to help African violets get the most out of it.

Ritchie recommends using compost tea every 90 to 120 days. Make sure to use it within 24 hours of making it. After that, it begins to lose its efficacy.

Add compost as a plant food

With most house plants, Ritchie recommends adding compost as a top dressing a few times a year. When the plants are watered, the nutrients will run into the soil.

However, because many violets are wick watered and need to keep their leaves dry, Ritchie recommends using compost tea in the watering repository instead. As the name implies, compost tea is made by soaking compost in water so the nutrients can enter the liquid. Oxygen is a vital ingredient; if the aerobic beneficial bacteria in compost are deprived of oxygen, they will die. Bottled compost teas are often not effective for that reason, but it's relatively easy to make compost tea at home.

Malibu Compost sells a mesh bag filled with compost that's intended for use in tea. "Drop it into a 2- to 5-gallon bucket, let it soak overnight, give it a good squeeze and a good stir, and put it into a watering

can,” Ritchie said. If possible, use warm water, which will activate the biology in the bag.

It’s also possible to make your own bag by filling a small, porous bag or old nylon stocking with high-quality compost. “What nutrients you’re getting out of a compost tea varies because it depends on how the compost was made,” said Chernoh. Just as a poor-quality synthetic fertilizer won’t help plants grow strong, a compost that isn’t made well won’t provide the nutrient-dense food plants need. Make sure you buy compost from a reputable garden store or commercial composting facility.

Another possibility is to look for worm castings, which is compost that has been made with the help of worms. They are particularly rich in many elements. They may be available in high-quality garden stores, or anyone can make them at home using a worm bin.

The University of Arizona College of Agriculture recommends using an aeration device, such as an aquarium pump connected to air stones, to vigorously add oxygen. The tea can be brewed for up to three days to extract the maximum amount of nutrients.

Once the compost tea is ready, add it to the water repository and let the plant take it up. The plant can sit in the tea for as long as you would normally water the plant. Make sure to catch all of the tea in a container; it contains humic acid, which can stain floors and furniture.

Ritchie recommends using compost tea every 90 to 120 days. Make sure to use it within 24 hours of making it. After that, it begins to lose its efficacy.

Ritchie has spoken at a few gatherings of the San Diego North County AVS. President Barbara Conrad received a sample of compost and found it helped her plants. “It made a difference for me with setting African violet leaves,” she says. “They definitely produced babies faster. To my surprise, the babies appeared to actually be greener than previous cuttings.”

Use compost in potting soil

The other place where compost can be effective is in potting soil. “It creates a biologically-diverse soil,” said Ritchie.

Although it’s possible to use compost made at home for house plants, Ritchie has a few cautions. One is that the compost should be completely finished before it is used. Compost should be dark in color, crumbly and smell like fresh earth. It’s a good idea to let it rest for several months even after it looks finished to ensure nutrients have broken down and larger organisms like worms have left the pile.

The other is that a “cold” compost pile — one made by adding materials over time, rather than building a pile all at once and getting it up to a certain temperature — likely will not eliminate all weed seeds and pathogens.

That’s why Ritchie recommends using a high-quality commercial compost that has been hot composted and screened to a very fine particle size. “One of the reasons I’m confident about the compost we make is that it’s thermophilic — it goes through a process to cook out pathogens and larvae,” he said. “It’s alive biologically, but it’s not filled with bugs.”

The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Extension at the University of Florida provides a formula for using compost in seedling mix: two parts compost, two parts peat moss and one part pre-wet vermiculite. For full-grown plants, try a mix that’s one-third compost, one-third topsoil and one-third sand, vermiculite or perlite. “You don’t want compost to be any more than about 40% of the mix,” said Chernoh.

Can you compost African violets?

People who have violets they no longer need should consider adding them to home compost piles or putting them in a curbside yard waste recycling — as long as the plants are healthy. “You don’t want to introduce anything that has a fungal disease, especially into a static compost pile where you don’t have any way to cook diseases out,” said Ritchie.

Plants with botrytis, pythium, powdery mildew or other fungal diseases should be placed in the trash. Healthy plants can be returned to nature and become part of a mix that will make the plants you keep healthy and vibrant.

Getting to Know Little Rock, Arkansas

By Danny Tidwell Email: dantwell@yahoo.com

The Central Arkansas African Violet Society will be hosting AVSA's 76th Annual Convention show and sale in the great state of Arkansas in our capital city of Little Rock. The festivities and violet family reunion will take place at the Little Rock Marriott on the banks of the beautiful Arkansas River. The dates are May 29 to June 5, 2022, so mark you calendar now.

The Little Rock Marriott is located in the heart of downtown Little Rock in the River Market District. There are numerous restaurants, pubs and shops within walking distance of the hotel (most within one to three blocks). If you want, just jump on the trolley to get there. Saturday will be jumping with activity at the farmers market just down the sidewalk, where you are sure to find some treasures.

Hot Springs, known as the Spa City, is located just about an hour from Little Rock. Hot Springs is known worldwide for its Victorian-style bathhouses, which were completed around 1888. Some of the bathhouses are still in operation today. The bathhouses have tapped into the natural hot springs that come from the ground at 143 degrees.

Hot Springs was also a popular hangout for some pretty famous gangsters in the 1930s, including Al Capone, Frank Costello, Bugs Moran and Lucky Luciano. You can learn more about them at the Gangster Museum of America on Bathhouse Row, which is also a great place to shop.

In North Little Rock, just across the river, is a place called the Old Mill, a re-creation of an 1880s water-powered gristmill. The landscaping and water features of the Old Mill are a sight to see. I bet you didn't know that some of the opening scenes from a little old movie called "Gone With the Wind" were filmed there.

There are so many things to do in and around Little Rock, including shopping and visiting museums, natural attractions and the city of Hot Springs.

The ESSE Purse Museum, located in downtown Little Rock, tells the evolution of the 20th-century American woman through the bags she carried and their contents. I am sure you will want to make a purchase at the museum shop, where you will find high-quality and highly unusual handbags and accessories.

The beautiful Arkansas River is just out the back door of the hotel, where you can also enjoy an amazing sculpture garden. It is a great place to take a little break and try to decide where you can add a new plant stand at home for the plants you purchase from the sales room or win through the silent auction or raffle.

There are so many more things to do in and around Little Rock. I will share more ideas in future issues of *African Violet Magazine*. We look forward to seeing each of you in Little Rock for the 2022 AVSA Convention as "Violets Go Hog Wild in Arkansas."





Photo Credit: Natalia Kozak

NK-NLO

Cyber Diamond Convention

Hybridized by: N. Kozak

Semiminiature



Photo Credit: Natalia Sorokina

SN-Ukhti Tukhti!

Cyber Diamond Convention

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Standard



Photo Credit: Irina Zaikina

KZ-94-2I

Cyber Diamond Convention

Hybridized by: I. Zaikina
Standard

Two Impressive Students Receive Scholarships from AVSA

By Dr. Charles Ramser

This year, there are two impressive recipients of the Boyce Edens Research Fund African Violet Society of America college scholarship.

The first is Julia Renee Major, who has been focusing on biochemistry and botany at North Idaho College. She will transfer to the University of Idaho in the fall. After graduating with her bachelor's degree, she hopes to go to graduate school and eventually find a job in a lab researching poisonous plants. "(My passion) is phytochemistry (plant chemistry) and my dream job would be to do research in that field for a living. Ultimately, any job where I can combine my love for plants and chemistry/toxicology would be great," she said in her prepared statement.



Julia Renee Major.

The other recipient is Korina Marie Bodisch, who has been attending Buena Vista University in Iowa and serving as a student technical assistant in the school's information technology department. "After I graduate with a bachelor's degree in scientific illustration, I plan on going to graduate school at the University of Georgia, where my master's degree in scientific illustration will have a concentration in botany," she shared in her application. Bodisch's parents are both

enthusiastic African violet growers. They passed their interest down to their daughter, and African violets still serve as an integral tool to keeping the family feeling connected.

This year, AVSA awarded scholarships to Julia Renee Major in Idaho and Korina Marie Bodisch in Iowa. AVSA is very proud of all our scholarship winners.

AVSA's scholarship program is open to undergraduate and graduate students who are studying ornamental horticulture, floriculture, plant genetics, botany or an equivalent program in an accredited college or university. Applications are due by March 1 of each year. More information is available in the Learn section of the AVSA website.

AVSA is very proud of all our scholarship winners through the years, and these two ladies certainly carry on that tradition. My thanks to Janet Riemer and Bill Price, members of the Scholarship Committee, for their help in selecting these two future stars.

Hudson Award for Affiliate Leadership

By Linda Hall Email: llhall@grm.net

Is there someone in your local African violet club who takes on every duty asked of them and goes above and beyond? We want to honor a special club member with the Hudson Award for Affiliate Leadership. AVSA presents this award annually at the national convention to one very deserving person.

Please take the time to complete a nomination form found on the AVSA website at africanvioletsocietyofamerica.org/hudson-memorial-award-nomination-form. If you have any questions or need assistance completing the form, please contact Linda Hall at llhall@grm.net or (816) 550-4061.

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Hybridizing African Violets

By Jere Trigg Email: JATrigg@msn.com

Editor's note: Hybridizing African violets can be an enjoyable and rewarding pastime — but for beginners, the process of crossing plants and growing seedlings can seem overwhelming. Jere Trigg wrote a great introductory piece on this topic for the African Violet Society of America website. We've adapted that article for print. For a longer, more detailed version of this article, please visit www.africanviolet.societyofamerica.org, click on Violets 101 then click on Read Articles. There are many great resources in this section, but to find this article, go to Propagation and click the button that says Hybridizing.

Step 1: Choose the Two Parent Plants You Want to Cross

The choice can be based simply on your two favorite plants and a desire to find out what kind of offspring they will produce, or you may have a goal of producing a specific flower color or shape. For example, you may want to create a large red-and-white bi-color single star-shaped flower. In the latter case, some basic knowledge of violet genetics is helpful. (See the article on the AVSA website for more details.)



Jere's Roll Tide, an African violet hybridized by Jere Trigg.

It will take about three to four weeks to determine if the cross “took” and that a seed pod is developing.

Step 2: Perform the Cross-Pollination

The pollen donor flower should be mature — slightly beginning to fade in color. Remove the pollen sack (anther) from the flower with your finger. Using a Selecto hobby knife (razor edge), cut about one-fourth of the pollen sack open to expose the pollen.

The flower from the other plant — from which the seed pod will form — should be a relatively young flower that has been open for about two to four days. Look for the stigma, which is the tip of the single narrow tube called the style in the center of the flower that usually points away from the pollen sacks. The stigma upon which the pollen will be placed will be sticky at this time, which enables the pollen to stick to it. Carefully apply the opened surface of the pollen sack from the donor flower (male component) to the tip of the stigma of the receiver flower (female component) so that the pollen adheres to it. Repeat this procedure for several flowers on one plant to enhance the chances of a successful cross.

Loosely tie a thread to the stems of the flowers that were crossed to ensure they are left on the plant for the pods to mature as other flowers fade and are

removed. It will take about three to four weeks to determine if the cross “took” and that a seed pod is developing. A developing seed pod can be observed as a swelling at the base of the flower after the petals have faded and dried up. The seed pod should be left on the violet until it has turned brown and the stem that supports it is completely dry.

It will require about three to five months from date of the cross-pollination to the time the seed pod is mature and can be removed from the plant. The seed inside the pod will be viable for several months, so it is best to err on the side of caution before removing the pod from the plant. Once the seed pod has dried, it can be stored in a resealable plastic bag for planting of seed during the next several weeks.

Step 3: Plant the Seed

The following supplies are needed before planting the seed:

1. Good-quality, fine-textured seed starter mix. It must be sterile, moisture retentive and have a very fine particle size because violet seeds are so small.
2. A container with drainage holes for the planting mix that can be covered with a transparent material such as plastic wrap to create humidity for seed germination. I recommend a clear plastic container with a lid that was used to package salad greens.

Burn about nine evenly-spaced holes in the bottom for drainage and in the lid to allow some air to circulate. Fill the container about three-quarters full with the potting mix. Add enough water to dampen the mix and allow excess to drain out of the bottom. Place the seed pod on a sheet of notebook paper which has been folded to form a crease. Using the Selecto knife, carefully cut the seed pod open and let the seed fall into the crease of the notebook paper.

Using the tip of a pencil, carefully distribute the seeds from the paper onto the surface of the potting mix, ideally about 1/8-inch apart. Make sure that any excess water has drained out. Place the lid on top of the container and put it in a window or one foot below artificial light. This is preferred because the heat promotes germination. Light stands are relatively expensive but have great advantages over natural light for growing violets. If you need to buy

one, I recommend looking at Indoor Garden Supply, which has a wide variety. (Get more recommendations such as this one in the full article on hybridizing at www.africanvioletsofamerica.org.)



Jere's Star Burst, an African violet hybridized by Jere Trigg.

Every few days, open the lid to make sure that the seed bed is moist. Don't assume that it is moist just because moisture is present on the inside top of the lid. Use the baster to add water to saturate the seed bed if necessary. Remain patient during the germination process. The first seed should begin sprouting in about three weeks. They will continue sprouting for an additional three months.

About one month after germination begins, remove the lid — but be extra careful about checking to ensure that the seed bed is moist. About two weeks after sprouting, you can begin feeding the babies with one-half the recommended-strength concentration of liquid fertilizer. Using the baster, apply the fertilizer in drops around each plant, being careful not to drop directly on the leaves. I use the edge of a paper towel to absorb the solution if it falls directly on the plant.

Step 4: Transfer Plants to Individual Pots

About three months after the first baby has sprouted, they should be big enough for their own pots. Before you separate the babies, you will need enough pots, a good-quality African violet potting mix and some seed starter. I use 3-inch diameter clear plastic Solo drinking cups with three drainage holes burned in them. I recommend Pro-Mix BX potting mix.

Add the potting soil almost to the top of the container. Make a small indentation in the center of the soil and put some of the seed starter mix in the hole for the young plant to begin growing in.

To remove the small plants, use a small cocktail fork to pry the plants up. Once the clump of mix has been raised, carefully remove the plant by gently pulling one of the leaves up, which will remove the plant, roots and some of the mix attached to the roots. Place the plant in the small hole. Using the baster, add enough water to stabilize the soil around the roots. Then add enough water to saturate the rest of the soil in the pot. Repeat the procedure until all plants have been removed to their individual containers.

Step 5: Fertilize Regularly

The plants should be fertilized at the recommended rate of 1/4 teaspoon per gallon every other time you water. Every six weeks, use plain water to flush accumulated fertilizer salts down from the top of the soil. Discard the water that drains out.

Watering with a weak fertilizer should be done whenever the top of the soil begins to feel a little dry, usually every four to seven days. If the top is slightly damp, you can water from the bottom using a saucer. The needed water should be drawn up within 15 minutes. Never let the pot sit in a saucer of water longer than 30 minutes to avoid root damage.

After watering, place the pot on a surface that provides for an air gap for the drainage holes. This could be a plastic plant saucer with ridges to allow air to contact the opening of the drainage holes. I use a 2-foot by 4-foot plastic ceiling tile grid, which will keep the drainage holes exposed to air.

Step 6: Repot the Babies

When the diameter of the plant reaches almost three times that of the container, repot it into a 4 1/2 - inch container. Violets should be repotted every nine to 12 months or if you notice that new growth from the center has not occurred for a period of a couple months. Over time, soil bacteria break down the organic constituents present, causing an acidic condition in the soil that prevents proper uptake of nutrients to the plant. The other issue is that the soil will become more packed, which eliminates the air pockets that provide needed oxygen to the roots, causing them to stop growing.

If the plant has developed a “neck” between the soil surface and the bottom row of leaves, this can be corrected during repotting. The procedure requires

first removing any damaged, yellow or very old leaves from the bottom row. This is accomplished by bending the leaf to one side or the other, causing the stem to break flush with the main stalk. Using a dull knife, carefully scrape the thin brown surface of the neck all the way around. Then remove enough of the bottom layer of soil to enable you to bury the neck in new soil. Water the plant thoroughly from the top. New roots will emerge from the neck, which will eventually stabilize the plant and encourage new growth to appear at the crown.

Plants should start
blooming within six
to nine months after
germination.

When repotting to remove soil that is more than one year old, you should remove as much of the old soil as you can crumble away from the roots. Add enough soil to the bottom of the pot to bring the plant up to the desired height in the pot. Then use a spoon to add the rest of the fresh potting mix around the sides of the root ball and up to just below the first row of leaves. It is not necessary to move the plant to a bigger pot unless the diameter of the plant has become three times larger than the diameter of the pot it was in. There will be a wide range in plant diameter among the seedlings from a single cross — a couple of mine are actually miniatures (less than 5 inches across).

Step 7: Enjoy Blooming

Plants should start blooming within six to nine months after germination. Expect many to resemble their parents in some ways, but no two will be identical. A few will be spectacular and may look nothing like their parents. If a violet is not blooming but is otherwise healthy looking, it is not getting enough light. Artificial lights solve this problem. By using a timer, you can vary the length of exposure to get the right amount of time. Artificial lights also enable you to better see and enjoy the beauty of your new plants.

In Memory

Lucille Chester

Lucille Chester of Tampa, Florida, passed away July 2, 2021 at the age of 90. Born in Lenoir, North Carolina, she moved to Florida in 1970 and became a member of the Tampa AVS, where she served as its President and in other leadership roles. She was a charter member of the African Violet Council of Florida and a member of AVSA, Dixie AVS and the Gesneriad Society. Lucille was perhaps best known for her artistry in creating beautiful dish gardens and terrariums, for which she won numerous awards. She was a great example of kindness and encouragement, especially for new members. She will be missed.

Fay Wagman

Fay Wagman of Rochester, New York, passed away on June 28, 2021 at the age of 89 after a valiant battle with cancer. Those who knew Fay will no doubt remember her easy smile, quick wit, ribald sense of humor, crystalline laugh and unflappable good nature.

Fay's ebullient nature was all the more remarkable in view of the sorrows she knew. She outlived two beloved husbands and also lost a son to cancer while he was still a young man. Fay's second husband, Irwin, was well known to African violet enthusiasts; his stoic demeanor made him a perfect "straight man" to Fay's vivacious doyenne.

Both Fay and Irwin served AVSA in many capacities through the years, and Fay was a popular commercial vendor at AVSA conventions for more than a decade. I met her at the Washington, D.C., event in 2002. Fay had her vendor's booth full of miniature and semiminature African violets, which I had never seen before. I was captivated, both by these dainty marvels and the silver-haired fairy godmother who

took so much pride in sharing them with her customers. I had a million questions, and Fay responded with her customary magnanimity and infinite patience. Before long, she asked me to sit with her behind the display table. I was hooked, and a lifelong friendship formed. I joined AVSA that day as a Life Member, and for many years thereafter, Fay was a constant and loving presence in my life.

Fay was one of a kind — the best kind. She bloomed among us as brightly as the African violets she loved, and she will be dearly missed. — *Written by Rich Follett*

Roger Wheeler

After a series of debilitating illnesses and a short association with hospice, Roger Wheeler passed away on July 18, 2021. He was a lover of African violets and a long-time member of the African Violet Society of America. He served as President of the Naugatonic AVS, Thimble Island AVS and Nutmeg State AVS. He was a member of several other violet-related organizations and an avid needlepoint enthusiast. Roger never married but had an extensive secondary family between his Greek and Violet families. He was a good friend and will be greatly missed.



Photo Credit: Pavel Enikeev

***Streptocarpus* 'DS-Neon'**

Cyber Diamond Convention

Hybridized by: P. Enikeev



Photo Credit: Stephen Covolo

***Streptocarpus*
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Streptocarpus
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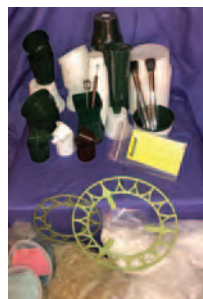
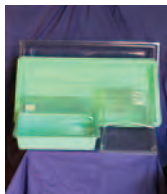
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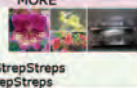
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